Bird flu confirmed in swans in Hungary

AP, Budapest, Hungary

Test results yesterday confirmed that three dead swans found in Hungary were infected with deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu, while Malaysia began killing birds after reporting its first case of the disease in more than a year.

The three dead swans. found earlier this month near the village of Nagybaracska, about 100 miles south of Budapest, were Hungary's first confirmed cases of H5N1, government spokesman Andras Batiz said.

Hong Kong's government, mean-

tists fear the virus could mutate into a form that is easily transmitted between humans, sparking a pandemic. More than half a million birds have

been killed in India's Navapur district since the virus was found in samples from some of the 30,000 dead chickens. The government plans to kill a total of 700,000 birds within a 1.5-mile radius of the outbreak in Maharashtra

On Tuesdav. a Maharashtra state official said the government planned to widen the culling area to include about 100,000 more birds. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to release the information.

Farmers distraught over their losses asked how they would survive. "It is a question of livelihood for 5.000 families." said Ghulam Vhora, a member of a Navapur poultry farmers

association, after his 30,000 birds were killed. "We are all iobless." Authorities have ordered 48 poultry farms around Navapur, more than 250 miles northeast of Bombay, to be

emptied and remain shut for three months. The government has offered farmers compensation of 90 cents per bird, a price farmers say is inadequate. Malaysia began culling birds and

launched house-to-house inspections for sick people in a central district where 40 chickens last week died from the virus. Health Minister Chua Soi Lek told reporters. The affected villages

nary experts on Tuesday debated the merit of letting governments vaccinate poultry to prevent avian flu from infecting commercial poultry stocks.

France and the Netherlands are pushing for poultry vaccination, while the EU Commission and several countries, including Britain, are opposed to that.

'Opinion in Europe is divided" on the effectiveness of vaccinating poultry, said Josef Proell, the Austrian agriculture minister, after chairing a meeting of EU farm ministers Monday.

Abbas, Hamas

FROM PAGE 16
Palestinian, brushed aside the criticism, saying it was sticking to the

In its January 30 statement, the Quartet said Hamas would risk losing vital aid -- when it formed a govern ment -- unless it rejected violence and

Commenting on Israel's decision, White House spokesman Scott cClellan appeared to focus on the group's demands of Hamas rather than on the timing of the Israeli move.

"I think that our view has been spelled out very clearly, not only from our government but in the statement of the quartet. This is really about Hamas and the choice that Hamas has before 'McClellan said.

'That's the issue. Hamas needs to make the decision if they want to be a partner in peace."

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice held discussions with her counterparts in the Quartet covering issues of support to the Palestinian people, on the eve of ar important trip she is making to the Middle East, a spokesman said.

The United States will continue consultations regarding the immediate financial situation of the interim (Palestinian) government," the spokesman Noel Clay, said. In fresh violence on Monday, Israeli

oops on a raid in the West Bank city of Nablus ambushed gunmen from Islamic Jihad, killing two, including the Palestinian sources said. Four gunmen were wounded.

Wage divides widen fast

crowd the labour market. If one looks

at the sectors, you will find that wage

rate is lower in the garment sector

because mostly women are employed

there. Contract labourers in agriculture

get higher rates, but they have to work

longer hours. This means their total

income does not increase. Industrial

And the remoter one goes, the

picture turns even gloomier. Shafiur

Rahman of Bhangamor village of

Nageswari upazila in Kurigram has

hardly any job here now. The last time

"Wage is too low here," Shafiur

says. "Afew years ago, I would get one

and a half kg of rice and 5 taka for a

day's work. Now I will get two kg of rice

In Sukhandihir Par in Kurigram.

another hinterland village, Kulsum and

Rokeya show how seasonality robs

away their wages. They were digging

earth to prepare a high ground for

Kulsum whose last job was four days

ago. "This is off season for paddy and

cultivation will not start before 20 days.

So I agreed to work for 30 taka. Had

there been work in the field, I could get

here for two days. The employer

promised to give them lunch every

day. The food -- rice and dal -- was

served yesterday, but today the

choice," says Rokeya. "I cannot refuse

to work because there is no work in the

this wage inequality is education, but

that remains highly skewed today,

says Dr Rushidan. "The poor cannot

cross the SSC threshold and unless

they can do it, there is little chance for

them to get better jobs with primary

better chance, Kulsum, Rokeya and

Lok Sabha marks

CPI-M leader Basudeb Acharia and

CPI leader Gurudas Dasgupta also

made speeches in Bangla, followed

by other members who spoke in

their mother tongues including

Gujarati, Marathi, Hindi, Tamil

Oriva, Urdu, Konkani, Raiasthani,

Former minister Suresh Prabhu

(Shiv Sena), who spoke in Konkani

as well as in Marathi, said many

problems in the world would vanish

if everyone is allowed to communi-

novel way to observe the day, was

euphoric over the spontaneous

response from the members and

noted that it showed the unity in

Chatterjee, who had hit upon the

cate in his mother tongue

Manipuri, Brajbuli and Bhojpuri.

Shafiur will have to fight for survival.

And as long as they cannot get a

village in this off season."

level education."

'Food or no food, we have no

One of the factors that could fight

employer said he will not serve lunch.

Both of them have been working

"I will get 30 taka today," says

and 10 taka. With three children,

was in Rangpur as a

workers are better paid."

rickshawpuller.

won't survive on it."

building a house.

like the rubber of a sling. With every thud coming from the fall of the spade, Sakhina knows she gets closer to Tk 60 that she would get today. Only a few feet away, equally thin men are doing the same job. They however will get Tk 80 at the end of the day.

"That is the system," Sakhina says wiping sweat off her forehead. "We are women, why should they pay us equal amounts?

Sakhina's wage has increased from last year's Tk 50 a day. But that did not increase her real wage.

"Today I have to buy rice at 17 taka a kg, last year it was 12 taka," she savs. "How can I be better off now? The poor are never better off."

Ali, Sakhina and the earth digger men they all show the spiral of wage inequality growing in the society today. The inequality grows on various plains -- from day labourers to waged employees, from women to men, from urban to rural workers.

"The inequality in wage exists on various levels," says Dr Rushidan Islam of BIDS. "For example, urban wage rate is 61 percent higher than rural wage rate. Even if you count for 20-25 percent higher cost of living for urban workers, they still are better off than their rural counterparts. Female workers' wage rate is 61 percent of a male's wage. The largest source of income inequality is the income difference between low paid hired workers and the profit/super normal earners

and various types of rent receivers." Md Saifur Rahman of Char Nachuni of Nageswari upazila in Kuriaram is one of the lucky ones who could wrestle himself free of the low wage trap. Along a dirt road, he was pushing his bicycle. Two huge bamboo boxes filled with eggs hang precariously from both sides of the cycle.

Once a farm labourer, Saifur now collects eggs from villagers and as soon as he has 1,000 eggs, he takes

them to the wholesalers in Kurigram. "I buy the eggs at 11 taka a Hali (four) and sell them at 12.30 taka.'

Saifur says. "This way I can make about 2,000 taka a month. Before starting his egg trade, Saifur

used to travel to Bogra and work there because of higher wage in the busi-

"I could get Tk 100 a day as a contract labour," he says. "But once the contract ended, I had to sit jobless for days together.

Joblessness is a too familiar to casual labours. In fact, 20 percent of the labour force does not get year round employment, according to the labour force survey. So, this section of the workers is worse off than those who have round the year jobs.

Ali is also lucky to be among the 14 percent of the total workforce who

have regular work. "All these people give rise to a different kind of inequality even within the lower income class," says Rushidan. "The real wage is increasing for the regularly waged people, but not so for the casual labourers who

3,931 bottles of Phensedyl

Members of the Rapid Action are just outside Kuala Lumpur, Battalion (Rab) seized 3,931 bottles Malavsia's largest city. of Phensedyl from a truck at A panel of European Union veteri-Madhabpur under Lalpur upazila of Natore district early yesterday. Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-

challenged the truck near Bandapukur Bridge in the frontier upazila at about 5:45am. The members of the anticrime

Rab seizes

elite force searched the truck and found the bottles of Phensedyl under rice sacks. They arrested two suspects, Muklesur Rahman of Mymensingh.

Judiciary

FROM PAGE 16 against nine bureaucrats on charge of distorting the judgment of the

udiciary separation case

and Sajib Munshi of Chandpur.

Nine accused officials are Joint Secretaries of the Establishment Ministry Lokman Hakim Badrul Alam Tarafdar and Md Abdur Rab Hawlader, Deputy Secretary Md Abul Kalam Azad Chowdhury and Senior Assistant Secretary Md Khalilur Rahman, Deputy Secretary of the Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry Shafigul Islam Talukder and Senior Assistant Secretary Mohammad Harunur Rashid, and Deputy Secretary of the Cabinet Division Md Fazlul Huq and Deputy Secretary of the Finance Ministry AKM Motaleb Hossain.

Jamuna Fertiliser

went to the spot and assured them of supplying fertilisers by 2:00pm

esterday. BCIC sources said, after producing 1,615 metric ton urea on Monday Jamuna Fertiliser Factory tripped in the night on some leaks developed in two urea plant tubes. Earlier this month, the same problem caused the factory at Tarakandi in Jamalpur to remain shut for one week.

"It'll take no more than 10 days to repair the damage. We've now a reserved stock of 14.000 MT urea at the factory," a BCIC source said. attributing the repeated closures of this or that factory under the corporation to poor funding for routine maintenance and ageing of the plants.

Sources said the BCIC has a ready stock of 182,000 MT of urea at ts factories and 21 buffer godowns across the country.

Sources said the price hike of diesel, used by fertiliser-carrying trucks and barges, was the main cause for some localised supply shortfall of fertiliser in Satkhira, Shepur and Jessore regions

2nd ODI

opener Javed Omar making his way for Khaled Mahmud, who called it quits after Monday's game.

Right-arm paceman Nazmul Hossain will replace left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak, who played as a super-sub in the last game

Despite the home team's frustrating showing in the first game, tickets for the second game have already been sold and cricket fans are expecting an improved performance from the Tigers against the Lankan Lions.

Bangladesh cantain Habibul Bashar said that his team would do its best to be at least competitive in the second game.

"Our first match performance was disappointing but I still believe that we can win at least one game in the series because we have the potential to fare far better." said Bashar.

SQUADS Bangladesh: Habibul Bashar (captain), Khaled Mashud (vicecaptain), Javed Omar, Shahriar Nafees, Aftab Ahmed, Mohammad Ashraful, Rajin Saleh, Alok Kapali, Mohammad Rafique, Mashrafee Bin Mortuza, Nazmul Hossain and

Syed Rasel. Sri Lanka (from): Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Kumar Sangakkara (vice-captain), Upul Tharanga, Sanath Jayasuriya, Jehan Mubarak, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chamara Kapugedera, Farveez Maharoof, Hasantha Fernando, Dhammika Prasad. Dilhara Fernando, Ruchira Perera, Akalanka Ganegama, Malinga Bandara and Kaushal

2 lakh

FROM PAGE 16

bad." NGO Forum is trying to supply arsenic-free water in some areas of the district using its own technology, he said.

The maximum tolerable limit of arsenic in water in Bangladesh is 0.05mg per litre but in 80 percent of the tube wells in the villages in Faridour Sadar Upazila the level is much higher, said NGO Forum

NGO Forum is providing its support in some areas of Sadar Upazila and Bhanga Upazila through its community based rainwater harvesting plant, arsenic iron

removal plant and deep tube wells. Out of the 64 districts in the country, 61 are affected by arsenic contamination in underground

Ekushey observed

DU Vice-chancellor SMA Faiz, representatives of DU Teachers Association (Duta), DU Syndicate and the Senate and ministers and state ministers.

Apart from the diplomats, a number of foreigners living in Dhaka took part in the Ekushey programme in the early hours yesterday.

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina accompanied by her party colleagues including Zillur Rahman, Abdul Jalil, Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Obaidul Quader and others placed wreaths at 12:15am. She placed three bouquets--one for herself and the other two as the party chief and leader of the opposition in parlia-

No one however placed wreaths on behalf of the ruling BNP or its

Alongside a continuing stream of mourners, different political parties and their front organisations, sociocultural and professional bodies placed wreaths in turn.

Over 7,000 security personnel drawn from Special Security Forces (SSF), Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and other intelligence agencies stood guard on and around DU campus that housed the Shaheed Minar. The security measures took effect on the afternoon of February

Volunteers of Bangladesh National Cadet Core (BNCC) led by Major Tawhidul Islam were in charge of security on the premises.

The day was a public holiday. The national flag was hoisted at half-mast at offices of different government, non-government, autonomous and private organisations and houses across the country. Besides, black flags were flown as a sign of mourning. President Prof lajuddin Ahmed.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the occasion. Different government and non-

government, socio-cultural and political organisations took elaborate programmes to mark the day. State-run Bangladesh Television

(BTV). Bangladesh Betar, and private TV channels aired special programmes. BTV telecast the wreath-laying ceremony live from the Shaheed Minar. Newspapers published supplements highlighting the significance of the day. Different national dailies came out on special arrangement, as the day was a

Many people including political leaders and cultural activists went to Azimpur graveyard to pay homage to the martyrs.

Communist Party of Bangladesh, Gono Forum, Jatiya Party (JP), Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, Workers Party of Bangladesh, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) and its front organisations, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Bangladesh Chhatra League and other student organisations, Supreme Court Bar Association, Dhaka Ainjibi Samity, Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka Reporters Unity, Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists, Dhaka Union of Journalists, Dhaka University Journalists Association, Dhaka Writers Forum, Bangladesh Medical Association, Jatiya Gono Front, Bangladesh Chhatra Union, Jatiya Sramajibi Party, Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology(Buet) and its teachers association, Bangladesh Open University, Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Independent University, North-South University, Muktijoddha Sangsad, Muktijoddha Sanghati Parishad, Bigyan Chetona Parishad, Amra Muktijoddhar Santan, Muktijuddha Projonmo Pahari Chhatra Parishad, Prapod, Nazrul Institute, Bangla Academy Shilpakala Academy, Ain O Salish Kendra, DemocracyWatch were among the organisations laying wreaths at the Shaheed Minar.

Body formed

damage ecological balance, sources in the division said withou elaborating.

Meanwhile, environmentalists expressed the view that gas and oil exploration in St Martin's and its neighbouring areas can be very damaging to the coral reef and biodiversity of the island.

Two of the three islands that constitute St Martin's are reserve forests while the other, called Narikel Jinjira, is a human habitat.

Bridal party FROM PAGE 16

while two others remained missing as of 6:00pm yesterday.

Local people rescued 10 injured passengers and rushed them to

Govt website

fixed phones of [the BTTB] and 21,64,000 are mobile phones of private sector," it reads.

However, sources said the mobile phone operators had around 11 million subscribers at the end of January this year. VoIP is now used widely but

illegally in the country, draining out nearly Tk 1,000 crore of the staterun Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) every According to sources, the

licence for VoIP will be awarded after setting up a common platform in four areas in the country--Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Bogra-under the BTTB through which Internet phone calls will be channelised.

But such a common platform, to be connected with the submarine cable, cannot start operation before next June. The submarine

cable project is expected to be inaugurated in early March. The BTTB recently recom-

mended the telecoms ministry not to award VoIP licence without having a national level common platform or bypassing its BTTB national Internet gateway.

Once VolP is legal operators will have to generate and terminate calls through the BTTB international gateway.

The number of illegal VoIP operators across the country has reached several thousand, according to some market operators.

Sumon Ahmed Sabir, general secretary of ISP Association, and Mohammad Abdus Salam, vicepresident of the association, said giving licences to more than 200 ISPs has also led to the illegal VoIP business. Only a handful of companies are genuinely providing Internet service, they said.

Crowley says

Bangladesh to flourish.

Meer Mobashsher Ali, naveb-eameer of National Ahmadiyya Jamaat, while briefing journalists after their meeting with Crowley said the congressman enquired if media reports on the attacks on the Ahmadiyyas are true. "We told him that the media in Bangladesh is quite free and the reports of Ahmadiyya repression is true," he

He said they thought their situation in the country should be brought to the concern of the international community. "But of course, if the government wants, it can stop any attack on the Ahmadiyyas as it protected us at Trishal on February 10," he added.

He said they expect that good sense will prevail in the government and it will protect the rights of the minorities as is ensured in the constitution. "There should be something effective like a human rights charter on international basis to protect the human rights of the minorities," he noted.

Earlier at the meeting, the BHBCOP submitted a memorandum to the US congressman, demanding repeal of the fifth and eighth amendments to the constitution to establish a secular and democratic state diminishing all disparities. It demanded proper inclusion of

the country's minority voters as well

as 5.5 million voters staying in India

in the voter list and assurance of

free and fair elections under a

neutral caretaker government and

an independent Election Commission.

The BHBCOP memorandum also demanded equal rights and proportional representation in every sphere of life, including parliament, cabinet, defence and civil administration, and assurance of safe return of 10 million minorities who have left the country at different times.

The memorandum urged the government to fulfil the legitimate demands of the aboriginal and indigenous communities, including preservation of their culture and heritage, and implement the CHT The increase in terrorist bomb

attacks over the last few years, especially in recent time, follows "directly from the communal state system and the Islamised constitution of Bangladesh", it said, adding, "The extremist forces are enjoying support of the present coalition government." The communal forces perpe-

Ramna Cathedral in Kakrail.

trated widespread attack on the non-Muslims before, during and after the general elections in 2001, and they are now conspiring to deprive the religious minorities of their voting rights in the coming elections, the BHBCOP alleged. BHBCOP President CR Dutta

General Secretary Dr Nim Chandra Bhowmik and other leaders were present at the meeting. Crowley also met Archbishop Paulinus Costa, chief of the

ple quarantined in Navapur. Catholics in Bangladesh, at the airlines said they were dropping chicken and eggs from the menu.

to space AP, Cape Canaveral, Us

Scotty will be blasted into space not beamed up and Gordo is returning for his third flight

Companies offer

to send remains

The planned launch sometime in March of a rocket carrying the ashes of actor James Doohan, who played chief engineer Montgomery Scott on "Star Trek," and Mercury program astronaut Gordon Cooper will give a fitting send-off to two men who helped popularise human space exploration. The craft also will hold the ashes of 185 others, including a telephone

technician, a nurse and a college student. Their families paid \$995 to \$5,300 for the flight, being conducted by one of a handful of growing businesses hoping to give a space experience to

the common folk. "It broadens the market, which is important to us because our whole business plan is about getting more people access to space," said Harvin Moore of Space Services Inc. of Houston, which is sponsoring the ashes flight. "Space needs to be affordable for all in some way."

Along with these services, space tourism businesses hope to send customers into suborbital space at a cost of \$25,000 to \$250,000 a person, far less than the \$20 million businessman Gregory Olsen paid Russia last fall for a ride to the International Space Station. Richard Branson's company, Virgin Galactic, already has 100 people who have paid \$200,000 apiece for flights, which the company has said it hopes to begin in 2008.

5-yr old boy FROM PAGE 16

n front of Mintoo's rented house at Nabadwip Basak Lane at around 11:00am and took him away by a microbus.

Rony's father Sujan Mia filed an abduction case with the Sutrapur Police Station. Referring to the case, the police said Mintoo borrowed Tk 8,000 from

Sujan six months ago but did not

repay it even after repeated requests.
"Mintoo made a phone call to Sujan yesterday saying Rony will be returned only if Sujan hands over his sister-in-law to Mintoo," the police

Bird flu-hit

said quoting Sujan.

FROM PAGE 16 "About 500 people have walked into makeshift medical camps in Navapur (town) to get checked for cough and cold since Monday evening," said T.P. Doke, Maharashtra's health director.

"We collected 46 new blood samples and throat swabs and have sent them for testing." Navapur is in Nandurbar dis-

trict, about 450 km north of

Mumbai, India's commercial hub. The district is a prominent poultry industry centre. Sales of poultry products have fallen 25 to 30 percent in India since the outbreak was first

reported at the weekend, an industry official said on Tuesday. "Sales of meat birds and egglaying birds have fallen 25 to 30 percent since the news of the bird flu. There has also been a softening of prices of 10 to 12 percent," Bharat Tandon, president of the Compound Livestock Feed Manufacturers' Association, told

Mumbai. Doke said authorities had completed a door-to-door search in Navapur where 30,000 people had been examined after the H5N1 virus was confirmed in some of the 50,000 poultry found dead in the region.

reporters after the group met in

As a bird flu scare swept India, health and poultry workers in Navapur poisoned or throttled chickens and then dumped them into pits wrapped in black plastic sheets in a frantic effort to contain the virus, witnesses said

Workers wearing blue overalls, anti-viral masks and goggles used spades to fill up the trenches because heavy earthmovers were in short supply, they said. TV channels showed some locals complaining of a rotting

stench from the pits, but officials said there was no fear of infection as the ditches has been sprayed with disinfectant. "We have culled about 300,000 birds and are vaccinating poultry around the area to create

a buffer zone. The outbreak has

been, by and large, contained,"

said Singh While federal and state politicians said the culling process would be over by late Tuesday, workers in Navapur said the number of birds to be culled was large and their job would spill over into Wednesday.

Officials estimate up to 500,000 birds would have to be culled. Reports of thousands of poultry deaths poured in from pockets across the country but veterinarians ruled out bird flu and said they were victims of On Monday, federal health

authorities said the situation was "under control". but all eves were on the test results for the 10 peo-Some hotels and domestic

programmes on Ekushey under the banner of different organisations in

Scientists dig into pile of comet dust

AP, St Louis

Scientists said Monday they have begun slicing and dicing the first of hundreds of microscopic specks of comet dust, virtually unchanged since the birth of the solar system that a Nasa spacecraft successfully returned to Earth in late January.

Preliminary analysis shows the dust, captured when the robotic Stardust spacecraft flew past the comet Wild 2 in January 2004, is unmistakably cometary in origin, said Don Brownlee, a University of Washington astronomer who is the principal scientist for the \$212 nillion mission. As such, the grains represent pristine samples of the primitive

material that came together to form the sun, the nine planets and every-thing else in the solar system, ncluding human beings. "We believe materials coming out of comets now is the same material that went into comets 4.5

billion years ago," Brownlee told

reporters at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science here. The initial work on the samples shows they contain glassy materials, crystals like olivine and various trace elements. Brownlee said. Each tiny grain is being sliced, sometimes into hundreds of sections, for detailed analysis. Some grains are just four microns in diameter, meaning it would take 25

of them to equal the width of a human hair Eventually, each grain should tell scientists something about its birth billions of years ago in the wake of dying stars, as well as how they came together to form new "Dust, lowly dust, plays a very important role in both the birth of solar systems and the death of solar systems," said Lee Anne Willson, an Iowa State University

astronomer. The Stardust samples represent the first time a space mission has returned solid bits of extraterrestrial material since the manned Apollo

mission to the moon in 1972. Direct study of the samples should allow astronomers, who can only peer on stars from afar, and astrophysicists, who are limited in what stellar processes they can recreate in the laboratory, to confirm hypotheses they've made about how things in the universe come together and fall apart, scientists said

"Stardust is going to challenge the very guesses we've made, said Joe Nuth, an astrochemist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center.

Stardust captured the comet samples in a material called aerogel, a silicon-based materia that is 99.8 percent empty space. The particles left telltale tracks-some shaped like carrots, others like turnips--in the icecube-sized chunks of aerogel when they struck. Each particle can take hours to remove, including through the use of a computer-controlled needle that cuts around each track, Brownlee said.

"It's like taking a plug out of a watermelon." he said.

The first major science results from the Stardust mission are expected to be presented March 13-17 at the Lunar and Planetary Science Conference outside

expecting to start operating 12 more

pray that the Iranian government will

make a final decision with sincerity.

veto any move by the United States

and its European allies to impose

sanctions on Tehran, share concern

about Iran's nuclear ambitions, but

do not want to sacrifice their com-

mercial interests in the Islamic

"China hopes Iran will restore

Russia and China, which could

flights on schedule by late tonight.

Iran-Russia

FROM PAGE 16

Republic.

Biman sees

After a weeklong humiliation due to a flight schedule management that had gone haywire following grounding of as many as four out of five of its DC-10s and one of its four Airbuses at a time, Biman, however, started to regain at least some of its lost strength with the resumption of operations of two of those DC-10s and the Airbus

Biman sources yesterday confirmed that out of its five DC-10s, three are in service now and all four Airbuses are in operation too. Besides, another DC-10 that has been lying in a hangar for almost six months will be readied for test runs within the next three or four days after taking an engine from another DC-10 which is undergoing a D-

check. By the time the D-check will be done, the craft will get an overhauled engine from Germany, sources said adding that another DC-10, which operates on Dhaka-New York route and was grounded in Brussels last week, safely returned home with passengers on board from London on Monday and brought the spares for the generator of the Airbus that was lying idle in the hangar.

"Now that we regained some of our fleet strength back, flight disarrays will be solved to a large extent," said a Biman official reminding about some temporary flight cuts on Dhaka-London, Dhaka-New York and Dhaka-Jeddah routes till the beginning of the airline's summer schedule on March 28. A Biman press release last night

said the national flag carrier is

recovering fast from the flight

schedule dislocations and was able

to fly as many as 13 international

flights in the last 24 hours and is also

suspension of all activities relating to uranium enrichment and create the conditions for appropriately resolving the Iran nuclear issue through peaceful negotiations, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told a news conference in Beijing on Tuesday. Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, who met EU

officials in Brussels on Monday, said Tehran would press ahead with its nuclear work with or without the Russian proposal. "We should move forward and returning to the suspension of our nuclear activities is not on our agenda," he told reporters on his

return to Tehran Russia and China say sanctions would only make things worse, but Lavrov also said earlier that Moscow could find it hard to resist calls for such measures in the Security Council unless Tehran resumed an enrichment moratorium it abandoned in January

BNP-AL clashes

FROM PAGE 1 Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) on

Monday midnight. A BCL procession came under JCD attack when the BCL men chanted anti-fundamentalism slogan

on the JU Shaheed Minar premises Some 25 cadres led by JU unit JCD President Parvez Mallik attacked the BCL procession in the presence JU Proctor Prof Kamrul Ahsan, Provost of Meer Musharraf Hossain Hall Prof Samsul Alam Selim and JU Tecahers' Association General Secretary Kamrul Hasan, witnesses said.

JU unit BCL President Sohe Parvez, General Secretary Mahmud Naser Jony and Organising Secretary lgbal were injured in the attack on the Shaheed Minar premises while 11 BCL leaders including its Joint Secretary Abdul Matin Bappi were beaten up at different halls in the night. The injured were admitted to the

JCD's hall cadres have taken

position at the entrances of the male

dormitories to prevent BCL activists from entering the halls, BCL activists Protesting the attacks by JCD, the BCL announced a two-day strike on

university medical centre.

the campus beginning from today. The viva-voce examination scheduled to begin today has become uncertain due to the strike. "I am shocked at the incident and

action will be taken against the responsible people soon," said Proctor Prof Our staff correspondent from Chittagong reports: Hundreds of Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) activists

captured the traditional Ekushey programme venue at the DC Hill in the early hours of yesterday. The ICS men observed some their own styles

The Ekushey Mela Parishad, which was celebrating programmes commemorating the language movement since last Saturday, could not hold its scheduled programmes until 11:00am when the ICS men left the

Witnesses said several hundred

ICS activists stormed the DC Hill

venue from different entry points from 3:30am yesterday and erected a stage there. Some police officials, however persuaded the ICS men to vacate the

Four AL activists were injured in a clash with BNP men at a Shaheed Minar in Bagerhat town on Monday midnight, reports our staff correspon-

place at around 11:00am.

dent at Khulna. The clash ensued after the AL men started chanting slogans against BNP witnesses said. Both the parties chanted obnoxious slogans against each other

language martyrs peacefully, police Bagerhat AL office in a press release yesterday said BNP men were placing floral wreaths at the

despite an earlier decision not to do so

for the sake of paying homage to the

Bagerhat BNP leaders denied the Our staff correspondent from

Shaheed Minar

Barisal and Gazipur and Narayanganj correspondents report that the Language Martyr Day and International Mother Language Day was observed in the places with due respect and spontaneous participation from people from all walks of life.

while, said a dead magpie found near an urban flower market was infected with the deadly strain, and health workers in western India expanded a massive slaughter of chickens. The H5N1 virus has devastated poultry stocks and killed at least 92 people, mostly in Asia, since 2003, according to the World Health Organisation. Most human cases of the disease have been linked to funding cut-off. contact with infected birds. But scien-