

Khaleda-Manmohan meet on March 21 to initiate new era

Foreign ministry, BNP leaders hope

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and her Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh hope to usher a new era in Indo-Bangladesh relations when they meet on March 21 to address each other's concerns and expand trade and economic cooperation.

and hold talks with her Indian counterpart on bilateral issues freely," said a high official of the foreign ministry. He said Bangladesh hopes Khaleda-Manmohan meet would give positive directives in resolving long running issues of huge trade imbalance, quick accord on sharing of waters of common rivers and maintaining a peaceful border.

Bangladesh, a senior official of the home ministry said these repeated allegations were never proved as no such camp could be located. Bangladesh is committed not to allow any insurgents whatsoever to use Bangladesh soil against any country, he added.

roads and railway, the official said these are the matters that might come up during talks between the two prime ministers. However, Dhaka might remain non-committal on extradition-treaty or tri-nation pipeline.



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, third from left, talks with foreign diplomats at a dinner hosted by her party at a city hotel yesterday.

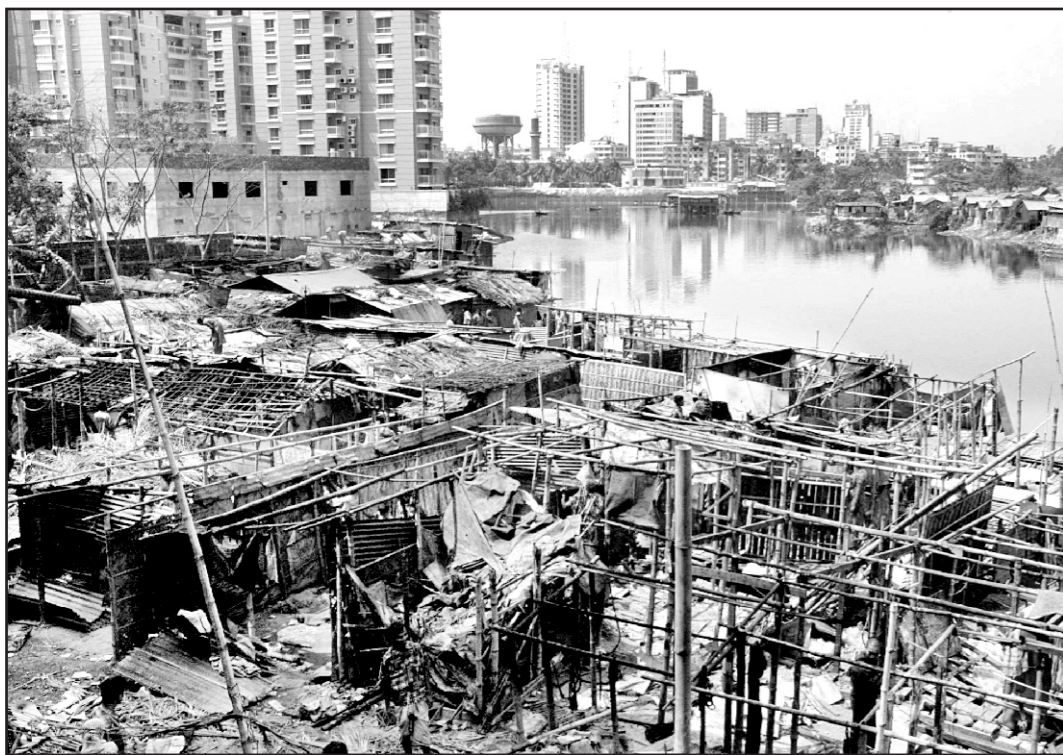
Malaysia to go tough with Bangladeshi students

ANN/SIN CHEW DAILY

Malaysian Home Affairs Ministry will review the procedure and regulations in issuing student visa especially for Bangladeshi students in order to prevent them from being illegal workers in Malaysia.

monitored by the ministry. A total of 1,700 Bangladeshi students were suspected in misusing student visas and they worked illegally in different sectors.

pursue their studies as our country will become the higher education hub in this region. However, government doubts when many foreign students are "advanced age" students," he added.



Rajuk dismantles shanties and evicts slum dwellers from a slum at Gulshan-1 in the city yesterday.

JS SECRETARIAT HC order stayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on Sunday stayed the operation of a High Court verdict that declared illegal the policy on seniority of parliament secretariat officials.

6 die in Gopalganj road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Six people were killed and 40 others injured when a passenger bus turned upside down at Kolapara intersection in the Gopalganj town yesterday.

Hospital. Condition of five injured is critical. The ill-fated passenger bus of 'Parjatak Paribahan Service' turned upside down when its driver lost control over the steering.

coach of Kanti Paribhan with over 60 passengers from Dhaka suddenly skidded off the road after the driver had lost control over the steering at Jundaha under Palashbari upazila on Bogra-Rangpur highway.

4th World Water Forum begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 4th World Water Forum begins in Mexico tomorrow where Bangladesh is expected to focus on the possible disastrous effects of the Indian Inter-River Linking Project and Tipaimukhi dam on the country in terms of arsenic contamination, drought and desertification.

CRACKS IN JAMUNA BRIDGE Probe body starts work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The inquiry committee formed by the government to examine the cracks in the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge started its work yesterday.

adding that only certain portions might be cordoned off for examination of the cracks. The committee, headed by Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, vice-chancellor of BRAC university, has been asked to submit its report within seven days.

Mutalib Akhand laid to rest

UNB, Dhaka

Ruling BNP lawmaker Abdul Mutalib Akhand was buried at his family graveyard at Jagaish in Gobindaganj of Gaibandha district yesterday.

NU admission test result published

UNB, Dhaka

The result of admission test for the 1st year honours courses (session 2005-06) of National University has been published with a pass percentage of 84.48.

The other members of the committee are Prof Ali Murtuza, vice-chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), Prof Bashir Ahmed of BUET civil engineering faculty, Additional Chief Engineer Adam Ali Gazi, Additional Director General of Bangladesh Railway Mohammad Abdullah, former chief engineer of Roads and Highways Department Sheikh Rabiul Islam and the chief engineer of Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority.

Discussion

Consumers Association of Bangladesh organises a discussion to mark the World Consumers Rights Day. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Launching ceremony

The launching ceremony of a book titled '21 August: Grenade biddha Bangladesh' edited by Mohammad Shahjahan will be held. Venue: Liberation War Museum. Time: 4:00pm.

WEATHER TODAY graphic with sun and cloud icons.

No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Table with columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

British HC to produce biometric passports

British High Commission (BHC) in Dhaka is going to start production of biometric passports from April 16 in a bid to continue processing straightforward applications in ten working days provided correct documentation and fee are received, said a press release yesterday.

The automated process used in the biometric passports will be able to verify individuals' identity based on their physical characteristics. New format passports will have a new design with additional security features, including a chip with the holder's facial biometric.

Uttara Club celebration begins today

UNB, Dhaka

Uttara Club has taken up a six-day programme to celebrate its 15th founding anniversary to be held on March 20. The programme, including assembly of the club members and their families, music, magic, swimming, lawn tennis, billiard and distribution of prizes, will start today.

Sitakunda ship-breaking yard

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Asians, as at least one of them is injured a day and one dies a week. A barefooted man with a large oxygen cylinder on his shoulder is walking to a giant chunk of steel. "Once this piece of steel was a part of that big ship," he says, pointing at a half-dismantled vessel floating nearby in the bay.

Assistants of the master welders do not wear protective eyeglasses while cutting the ships into pieces. Workers carry on bare shoulders iron sheets and chunks that can be more conveniently done by lorries. "Do you know the weight of that piece?" I ask a man carrying a metal sheet. He grunts, "No."

scrapped a year, mainly in five countries--China, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Vietnam--and some in Turkey too, says a Greece source. With the global fleet growing fast, from 15,000 ships in the 1960s to 62,000 in 2000, and with the ships built before 1970 being sorted out for decommissioning, the number of ships to be condemned for scrapping will also rise in the future, she tells The Daily Star.

The foreman guides me around one of some 20 ship-breaking units in operation in the yard on condition of not mentioning his and the unit's names. Journalists are not welcomed here where labour law and industrial safety code violations are rampant. So I avoid giving my identity to get a close look into the working reality.

The recent report of a survey conducted by two internationally reputed organisations, Greenpeace and International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), says on average at least one worker is injured a day and one dies a week. The report titled 'The Human Cost of Breaking Ships' published last December simultaneously from Bangladesh, India and Switzerland says at least 1,000 workers have died in the last 20 years in Bangladesh's ship-breaking yards.

Due to the absence of a national policy, ship-breaking unit owners are not at all concerned about the workers' rights, working environment or using modern technology. However, with UNDP help, the government has undertaken a project, which will train the ship-breaking workers and frame a guideline for the ship-breaking industry," Farid Alam, director of the project, says.

90,000 tonnes of Indian rice, wheat for flood victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian high commissioner in Dhaka Veena Sikri formally handed over the receipt of a consignment of 90,000 metric tonnes of rice and wheat as relief from India to Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, minister for food and disaster management, at a function in the city yesterday.

Dr Razez's anniversary of death today

UNB, Dhaka

The 21st death anniversary of eminent lawyer Dr Aleem Al Razez will be observed today with due solemnity. Under the auspices of Dr Aleem Al Razez Memorial Council, different educational institutions and socio-cultural organisations have taken elaborate programmes to mark the day.

Obituary

UNB, Dhaka

Amir Hossain, freedom fighter and vice-president of Modhupur upazila Awami League, passed away due to old age ailments at his residence today at the age of 85.

Chehlum

UNB, Dhaka

Amir Hossain left behind his children, a host of friends and admirers to mourn his death. Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina in a message expressed her deep shock at his death. She conveyed her sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

Md Abdul Aziz

UNB, Dhaka

Chehlum of Belayetul Karim Chowdhury, a noted soil scientist and son of D a s h m i n a Talukdarbari, will be held today after Maghrib prayers at his residence at House No-7, Road No-20, Sector-7, Uttara Model Town in the city, says a press release.

Chehlum of Belayetul Karim Chowdhury

UNB, Dhaka

Chehlum of Md Abdul Aziz, a retired government official, will be held at his village home K a b i l u p a t D e b i d w a r u p a z i l a in Comilla after Juma prayers on March 17, says a press release.