

## PM off to Turkey

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia left Dhaka yesterday for Ankara on a four-day state visit to Turkey.

She will lead the Bangladesh delegation at the official talks with Turkey today. Trade and investment between the two countries are expected to figure high in the talks.

A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the prime minister and her entourage took off from the Zia International Airport at 12:40pm.

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## FIRE IN JS Probe body now to submit report by Apr 16

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The inquiry committee on April 8 fire inside the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban has failed to submit its report within the extended deadline of April 11 as the probe body is struggling to find clues.

The time limit for submitting the probe report has now been extended to April 16.

The committee formed

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## UN-ESCAP MEETING

# Saifur raises Dhaka's concern over barriers to regional trade

UNB, Dhaka

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman has raised Bangladesh concerns over hurdles to trade with Nepal and Bhutan at an Eacop meeting that examined regional cooperation in infrastructure development.

"We wanted to get connected with Nepal, buy electricity from Bhutan. But we're not getting these due to a neighbouring country," he told the Ministerial Meeting of the 62nd Commission Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Escap) held in Jakarta on April 10-12.

Saifur Rahman returned home on Tuesday night ahead of the conclusion of the meeting as he made the scheduled presentation at a roundtable of ministers on

Tuesday on "Enhancing Regional Cooperation in Infrastructure Development."

Transportation infrastructure is the most important thing to facilitate trade, economic growth, employment-generation and poverty-alleviation, he said.

But he asked how the connectivity could be developed when others consider Tipaimukh Dam to generate hydro-electricity pushing others to face non-navigability.

For last two months, the country was facing non-navigability for blocking of or diverting the free flow of water from the upstream, he added.

"It's the reality. Now the question is how do we deal with the reality," the minister told newsmen at the Zia International Airport on his return from Jakarta.

He, however, stressed at the

roundtable the need for greater cooperation and understanding among the neighbouring countries to implement regional infrastructure projects.

On a proposed Asian highway, Saifur said Bangladesh suggested its own road through Myanmar, which was not accepted.

He said the meeting proposed a financial institution to fund regional infrastructure. But he suggested that it would be a duplication of the existing institutions such as Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank.

Other delegations from USA, UK and Russian Federation were also of the same opinion, he added.

On the sidelines, Finance Minister Saifur Rahman exchanged views with the ministers of India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Korea, Fiji, and

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## Miladunnabi observed

UNB, Dhaka

Eid-e-Miladunnabi, the birth and death anniversary of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM), was observed across the country on Tuesday.

The government as well as religious and socio-cultural organisations and political parties held various programmes, including discussions, highlighting the significance of the day.

The day was a public holiday. National flag was hoisted atop

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## Outlaw killed in 'shootout' with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A regional leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML) was killed during a 'shootout' between Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members and his accomplices at Digholia upazila in Khulna.

The dead was identified as Md Shahidul Islam alias Hath Kata Shaheed alias Keherman, 41, of Kafila village under Bakerganj upazila in Barisal.

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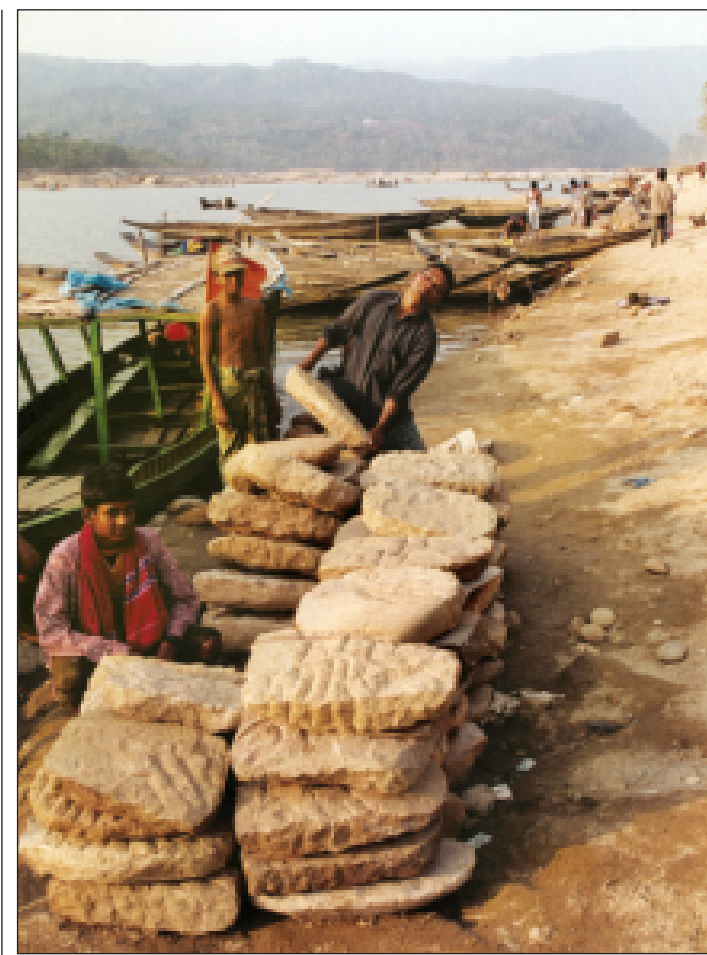


PHOTO: STAR

Large stones collected from quarries in Jaflore are cut into grind stones and carried to different places for sale.

## VOTER LIST SC hearing of CEC's appeal continues today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The full bench of Supreme Court (SC) decided to continue the hearing on chief election commissioner's (CEC) leave to appeal petition today following yesterday's hearing.

On February 1 the CEC filed the appeal against a High Court (HC) directive that had been issued on January 4 directing the Election

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## BSF kills 1, ransacks houses

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi cattle trader at Tarali, a bordering village in Swarnpnagar thana in 24 Pargana district of West Bengal, India on Tuesday night.

The victim, Zakir Hossain, 42, of village Keragachhi in Kalaroa upazila, went to India to buy cattle on April 10 with a group of Bangladeshi cattle traders, sources said.

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PHOTO: STAR

Workers set up bamboo poles for preparing makeshift stalls at the Dhanmondi Club playground yesterday as the club rented out the field for a Baishakhi Mela, a folk fair marking the Bengali New Year.

## Dhanmondi Club rents out playground again flouting HC order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Defying a High Court order, Dhanmondi Club authorities once again rented out the Dhanmondi playground at Road no 8 to hold a seven-day long Baishakhi Mela starting on April 14.

Workers were yesterday seen digging almost everywhere on the field to set up bamboo structures for which the organisers are charging up to Tk 10,000 each.

Following a case filed in 2004, the High Court (HC) ordered the erstwhile industries minister, who had organised a similar Baishakhi Mela (fair) on the ground, to immediately remove all materials from there and to shut down the fair. The HC bench also directed Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to protect the playground for sports only and to remove all structures obstructing sporting activities within 21 days.

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The Institute of Architects Bangladesh and Bangladesh Poribesh Adolon (BAPA) had filed the case.

The move to commercially use the playground again, depriving children and youngsters from sports facilities, comes hardly ten days after the same authorities illegally rented it out to hold a council of Bangladesh Chhatra League, student wing of the main opposition in parliament, Awami League.

Abu Taleb, estate officer of DCC, also custodian of the playground told The Daily Star that the club authorities acted 'totally illegally' by renting out the playground.

"They did not seek any permission from us to hold such a commercial event on a playground where children play," Taleb said adding that DCC will take action against the club.

## JANATA TOWER FINE Ershad faces court on waiver order

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday filed an affidavit-in-opposition in the High Court against the writ petition to realise rest of the total amount of the fined money from him (Ershad) in Janata Tower corruption case.

Ershad appeared in person before an assistant registrar of the Supreme Court to file the affidavit. Meanwhile, hearing on the writ petition started in the High Court.

The High Court bench comprising Justice Mozammel Hossain and Justice Farid Ahmed heard submission from advocate MA Malek, an amicus-cure of the case.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (Blast) on March 23

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## HASINA ON POLLS REFORM

# Govt killing time in the name of talks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government will have to meet the opposition's reform proposals to establish peoples' right to vote.

The BNP-Jamaat coalition government is killing time in the name of dialogue, the AL chief said, adding,

"Is the prime minister's position in the alliance so weak that her three allies are not allowing the BNP to discuss the reform proposals alone?"

She was speaking at the biennial council of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) at the

auditorium of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital as chief guest.

The former prime minister said they placed the reform proposals in the House only for a free, fair and neutral election to establish peoples' fundamental rights, including that of voting.

"We will surely come to power, if a free, fair and neutral election is held. As we are working for the freedom of farmers, labours and general people from the misrule, price hike of essentials, crisis of power, fertiliser, gas and water, people will vote us to power," Hasina said.

But the people have to remain alert so that the alliance government

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## 3 die as boat capsizes in Padma

UNB, Pabna

Bodies of three passengers of a boat that capsized in the river Padma on Tuesday night

near Paksey were found floating yesterday while seven others remained missing.

Police said the boat with 25 passengers on board was coming to Paksey from Gopalnagar in

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Prayer Timing		
April 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-35	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-24	6-28
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Tata still eager to invest

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

Tata Group is still eager to invest in Bangladesh as part of its plan to take part in the development initiatives in South Asia, the group's Bangladesh Project Director Manzer Hossain said.

The Indian industrial giant is seeking a win-win solution to end the stalemate over gas price issue before signing an agreement on its proposed \$2.5 billion investment, Manzer said on return to the city after a month-long visit to Bombay and Delhi to chalk out the next course of action.

The group is ready to continue discussion on the investment deal after submitting a review report this month. "The door for discussion should always remain open but we prefer an early decision," Manzer

said.

"Our experts in Bombay are working seriously to revise the report so that there could be a situation to start the ball rolling."

The report will be submitted within a couple of weeks, he said.

On gas price, Manzer said Tata group seeks a fair price so that its projects could viable as well as Bangladesh could benefit.

Chairman of the group Ratan Tata recently wrote to energy adviser Mahmudur Rahman that reflected the importance the group attaches to investment in Bangladesh, he mentioned.

The Indian conglomerate was supposed to submit its report by the end of last month. Sources in it attributed the delay to some corrections being made in its

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## MILADUNNABI

# Devotees go on rampage in Ctg

10 hurt, property worth Tk 20 lakh damaged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

People willing to join a traditional religious procession in the port city on the occasion of Miladunnabi went on rampage near Shah Amanat Bridge on the Karnaphuli here on Tuesday, setting fire to toll

plazas, two other offices and costly materials for repair of the bridge.

More than 10 people were injured in the incident.

The trouble started when around 200 buses carrying several thousand people from southern

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