

# Russia still opposed to sanctions on Iran

AP, Moscow

Russia said it remains opposed to sanctions against Iran, while China expressed hope for a negotiated solution as senior diplomats from six countries converged in Moscow yesterday to map out the next step toward solving the Iranian nuclear standoff.

The United States and Britain say that if Iran does not comply with the UN Security Council's April 28 deadline to stop uranium enrichment, they will seek a resolution that would make the demand compulsory.

So far, Iran has refused to give up uranium enrichment, which the United States and some of its allies suspect is meant to produce weapons. Tehran insists its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad remained defiant Tuesday, warning that Iran will "cut the hand of any aggressor" that threatens it and insisting that Iran's military has to be equipped with the most modern technology.

"Iran's enemies know your courage, faith and commitment to Islam and the land of Iran has created a powerful army that can powerfully defend the political borders," he told a parade to commemorate Iran's Army Day.

Tuesday's army parade in Iran gave leaders another opportunity to show off the country's modern military equipment, including missiles that are difficult to track with radar, super-fast torpedoes recently tested in war games and other domestically produced weapons.

The United States has said Iran may have made "some strides" in its military but was likely exaggerating its capabilities.

Senior diplomats from the five permanent Security Council members that wield veto power Russia, the United States, France, Britain and China plus Germany will meet over dinner Tuesday in Moscow to discuss the latest moves in the standoff.

Discussions were expected to continue Wednesday during a meeting of envoys from the Group of Eight major industrialized nations.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin reaffirmed Moscow's insistence on more diplomatic efforts with Iran. "We are convinced that neither sanctions nor the use of force will lead to the solution of the problem," he said, according to the ITAR-Tass news agency.

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai, the country's top nonproliferation official, visited Tehran over the weekend and appealed to Iranian leaders to reach a negotiated settlement to the dispute, the Foreign Ministry said Tuesday.

Russia and China, which have strong economic ties to Iran, have opposed punitive measures.

Iran's ambassador to Russia, meanwhile, suggested that Tehran would prepare for war if necessary.

"One of the ways to prevent a war is to be prepared for it. But Iran will do everything possible to avoid any war in the region," Gholamreza Ansari was quoted as saying by the Russian news agencies. "We hope the Iranian question will be resolved through negotiations."

The comments came a day after Israel branded Iran as part of an "axis of terror" with Syria and the Hamas-run Palestinian government and said they are making "clear declarations of war."

"A dark cloud is looming above our region, and it is metastasising as a result of the statements and actions by leaders of Iran, Syria and the newly elected government of the Palestinian Authority," Israel's UN Ambassador Dan Gilleman warned.

On Friday, Ahmadinejad called Israel a "rotten, dried tree" that will be annihilated by "one storm." He previously angered many world leaders by calling for Israel to be "wiped off the map."

## Writ petition

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She prayed to the court for directing the government to take necessary disciplinary actions against those police officials on whose orders the journalists on their professional duties were abused and tortured.

The people responsible for this untoward incident should apologise in public to restore common people's trust in the police, the petition said.

Advocate Fowzia Karim Firoze filed the petition on behalf of Salma Ali. Its hearing may take place today.

The respondents of the petition are the home secretary, inspector general of police, Chittagong Metropolitan Police commissioner, deputy commissioner of Chittagong, and deputy commissioner (port), Chittagong Metropolitan Police.

The petition said the law enforcers' attack in Chittagong is totally barbaric adding that the respondents should be made accountable for.

The role of the police should be to ensure protection of the general people and they should not be used to serve the purpose of any vested quarter, the petition noted. The April 16 incident shows that the state has failed to ensure protection and security of the citizens as spelled out by the constitution.

## Richard Boucher

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State and has served as Chief of Mission twice overseas.

He began his most recent tenure as spokesman for the State Department in May of 2000 under Secretary Albright and continued as spokesman throughout the tenure of Secretary Powell and Secretary Rice until June of 2005. A career Foreign Service officer, Boucher entered the Foreign Service in 1977.

## 2 outlaws

FROM PAGE 1

A pipe-gun and four bullets were retrieved from the spot.

According to police, Aziz of village Pantapara in Jhenidah sadar upazila was accused in 11 criminal cases including six for murder.

Our Khulna Staff correspondent reports: Regional leader of the BPCP Iku Mina, 50, was killed in an encounter between his accomplices and the Rab at Hari Khalil under Tero Kheda upazila of Khulna at 4:25am.

He was arrested on Monday night at Jaikhana Ghat of Khulna city, says a Rab press release.

One pipe gun and three pipe gun bullets were recovered from the spot.

A Rab member also sustained bullet injury during the 20-minute shootout.

Iku Mina was an accused in several criminal cases, including four for murder, filed with the Rupsha Police Station of Khulna and Mollahat Police Station of Bagerhat.

He was also among the outlaws who gunned down two policemen on July 4 in 2003 at Bamandanga in Rupsha release.

## Criminalisation

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allowed to spend. While the expenditure ceiling is fixed at Tk 500,000, in reality it is "only a fraction of the true cost" spent in campaign activities.

Identifying such exorbitant cost for election campaign as a major source of corruption, the report says, "The illegality of such funds reduces transparency and blurs the line between a parliamentarian's public and private funds."

"In the absence of efforts to reduce the cost of contesting elections, curb campaign spending, or properly enforce rules relating to the declaration of a candidate's assets and liabilities and make such declarations public, the risks of state capture by those who bankroll candidates become significant," the report says.

The WB report advocates for implementing the regulations for declaration of assets and liabilities of high public officials and make them public.

The government also recognises this factor and has agreed to review the implementation of the relevant legislation and policies, recommend necessary actions and make the review public, the report says.

The report says until all these issues are addressed there can be no real political governance reform. The WB is already working with other bilateral development partners so that they provide help in attaining these reforms, including strengthening political competition and ensuring free and fair elections, it adds.

The report says the politicisation of the civil servants is also greatly hampering the reforms initiatives. "The unhealthy competition between the major political parties leads to a highly politicised civil service and means that reforms are unsustainable when power shifts from one party to the other," it says.

# Body to settle trade

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liberalisation in the area," a high official, who was present at the meeting, said.

Meeting sources said a deadline for tariff reduction in the second phase of the agreement will also be fixed in the experts meeting. Safta countries will have to reduce their tariff lines within the deadline.

Meanwhile, as per the agreement, in the second phase, which will start from January 2008 and end on December 31, 2016, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will reduce their tariffs within zero to five percent for products from member countries which are among the least developed countries (LDCs).

The first phase of the agreement covers the period from January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2007, during which tariffs are to be reduced in two equal annual instalments to 20 percent in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and to 30 percent in Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal and the Maldives.

Earlier, the member states agreed that the first round of tariff reduction will take place in July 2006.

The sub-committee comprising representatives from Safta countries will constantly review the list of sensitive products to shorten the existing list so that trade liberalisation procedures can be successful, said AKM Fazlur Rahman, deputy secretary to the commerce ministry of Bangladesh, after the meeting.

About the road map, he said a framework will be chalked out that will decide how Safta committee of experts (CoE) and Safta ministerial council (SMC) will run their activities in future.

"So far, there has been no disagreement on the first day of the meeting," Rahman said.

Four agendas were discussed on the first day of the three-day meeting, which were -- rules of procedure for Safta CoE, rules of procedure for SMC, review of the list of sensitive products, and the trade liberalisation programme.

CoE, comprising a senior economic official from each member

state, will support SMC and monitor, review and facilitate implementation of the agreement.

The output of the CoE meeting will be placed at the SMC meeting, which is scheduled to be held on April 20, 2006. SMC comprises commerce or trade ministers of the member states and it is the highest decision making body regarding Safta agreement implementation.

The meeting decided that Safta CoE and SMC will meet every six and twelve months respectively, sources said. They however added that CoE will meet once a year or more often as necessary to settle any dispute or to review Safta implementations.

Earlier, at the inauguration session of the meeting Abdul Karim, commerce secretary of Bangladesh and Chenkyab Dorji, secretary general of Saarc spoke.

In his speech, Abdul Karim said although in South Asia regional cooperation in trade began in 1995 with the launching of South Asia Preferential Trading Arrangement, the volume of intra-Saarc trade did not grow much despite the arrangement.

He said, "Trade flow among South Asian countries account for only 4 percent of the region's total global trade. In this context South Asian countries moved to form a free trade area".

Harmonisation of customs procedures, mutual recognition arrangements for standards, testing and conformity assessments, and above all, investment facilities are key to reaping benefits from the trade area, he said.

Introduction of Safta in force is an opportune moment for all the stakeholders, particularly for the business communities of the region for focusing on maximising the gains from a level playing field that the agreement provides, said Chenkyab Dorji.

"This will result in a win-win situation for all and prepare the ground for the next stage of economic integration of the South Asian region", he said.

## Saber

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Haq of the 7th Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka, took into cognisance a criminal revision filed by the prosecution against a lower court order acquitting Saber.

The judge also directed the lower court to frame charges against him.

District Public Prosecutor (PP) Mohammad Mohsin Miah filed the criminal revision with the District and Sessions Judge's Court on July 1 last year.

On April 20 last year, Magistrate Delwara Begum of the First Class Magistrate's Court accepted Saber's discharge petition, saying the allegations brought against him were not proved.

In her order, the magistrate said Saber was relieved of the charges as he along with his family was in Makkah to perform Umrah on that day.

The court however framed charges against former AL lawmaker Kamal Ahmed Majumder, party leader from Savar/Murad Jong and 41 others.

BNP activist Mohammad Kafiluddin filed a case with Savar Police Station against unnamed local hoodlums belonging to the AL on August 20, 2002, 14 months after the motorcade attack.

But Criminal Investigation Department (CID) pressed charges against Saber, Kamal, Murad and 41 others on March 12, 2004.

Army personnel arrested Saber at Zia International Airport before his departure for London on October 20, 2001. He was first shown arrested under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code and then in the motorcade attack case on October 24.

## Manikganj-4

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Mobile teams will patrol the entire election area to combat any untoward incident, he said.

Seven candidates are running for the office. They are four-party candidate Engineer Mainul Islam Khan, also son of the late Shamsul Islam Khan MP, (Paddy Sheaf), Civil Society candidate Mushfuqur Rahman Khan (Wall Clock), Independent candidates Golam Sarwar Milon (Football), Khalilur Rahman (Spectacles), Sirajul Islam (Hukka), independent candidate Moazzem Hossain Tusar (Cup-saucer) and Krisak Sramik Mukti Andolan President Krisak Mohammed Sadek (Rooster). The Awami League led 14-party is not contesting the election.

With the death of former Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan MP on January 22 this year the parliament seat fell vacant.

# Shutdown enforced

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markets remained closed.

Even rickshaw-vans selling vegetables and fish in the city lanes and lanes did not move while children were seen playing on the empty streets.

Educational institutions including Rajshahi University, RUET, Rajshahi Medical College, and commercial centres, banks, offices, and courts remained closed.

A large number of police deployed in the city did not interfere with the processions and pickets.

From the early morning picketers took position on different roads and bi-lanes, and brought out several processions.

A huge procession brought out from Rajshahi Zero Point at around 11:00am paraded the main streets of the city.

They chanted slogans demanding supply of natural gas through pipeline within three months. They shouted 'no gas no vote' indicating their unwillingness to vote for the ruling party in the next elections if the government does not supply gas in the area.

The rally at zero point was addressed, among others, by Gas Andolan Parishad convener Mahatab Uddin, leaders Al Mamun and Anwar Hossain, Rajshahi Protection Movement Council leader Jamaat Khan, city AL General Secretary AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, Udichi Shilpi Gosthi leader Syed Shaiful Alam,

journalist Mustafizur Rahman Khan, Rajshahi Press Club President Anu Mostafa and professional body leaders.

Calling upon the people to extend support to the next programme, the speakers warned of a tougher movement if the government fail to supply gas in Rajshahi.

A correspondent from Pabna adds:

Palli Bidyut Grahak Kalyan Samity, an association of rural power subscribers, observed a half-day hartal in Chatmohor upazila of Pabna district yesterday demanding fulfilment of its 13-point demand that includes uninterrupted power supply, reduction of charges and action against the corruption of Palli Bidyut Samity, the power supplier.

The aggrieved customers of Pabna Palli Bidyut Samity-1 brought out a procession with bamboo sticks from Chatmohor Degree College premises in the morning, supporting the hartal.

Later, they held a protest rally in front of Chatmohor upazila office with Grahak Kalyan Samity convener advocate Shakhawat Hossain in the chair.

Urging immediate fulfilment of their demand, the organisers announced forming a human chain on April 27.

# 14-party sit-in

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24 hours from midnight yesterday.

It has directed the home ministry to effect strict security measures so that the opposition workers keep off the premier's office. Similar measures had been taken to prevent the 14-party men from holding a sit-in at the Secretariat on March 30.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) sources said they have plans to halt the demonstrators at a point far-off the PMO by barbed-wire barricades and layers of security forces.

The police authorities however gave assurance that the restrictions would not affect public and vehicular movements.

Meanwhile, AL and Jubo League have claimed that many of their leaders and activists were rounded up on Monday as part of "the government's efforts to mar the opposition programmes".

Police vans crammed with arrestees moved back and forth between the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka and elsewhere in the city all day long yesterday.

Besides, family members of the arrestees crowded the court premises as their dear ones were produced before the court. Talking to the newsmen most of them claimed their relations are innocent and mere victims of police harassment.

## AREAS TO BE RESTRICTED

The ban will be in place in areas from Mohakhali crossing to Shaheed Jahangir Gate, PSC to Parjatan crossing, Bijoy Sarani to Aeroplan

crossing, Rokeya Sarani to Shishu Mela crossing to eastern side of Mohammadia Supermarket via Mirpur Road, Dhanmondhi 27 (old) to Square Hospital on Panthapath to Shelley crossing via Hotel Sundarban crossing, from Free School Street and Bangla Motor Link Road to Maghbazar intersection to Tongi Diversion Road up to Rainbow crossing and from Satrasta crossing to Mohakhali via Nabisco crossing.

All roads, lanes and by-lanes under the above mentioned areas will be within the purview of the the ban, says a police release.

## Fine arts

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Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz and informed him of the matter.

The threat, issued in a bid to destroy the basic characteristics and spirit of the Institute of Fine Arts, is a threat to the country's cultural heritage as well, Prof Akhtaruzzaman said.

"We have decided to tighten security measurers there [IFA]," Proctor Prof AK Firoz Ahmed said, adding that a general diary was filed with Ramna Police Station yesterday.

Probably due to the threat letter, replica of peacock was not made for this year's Pahela Baishakh celebration, said a student of the IFA.

# Contempt law aims

FROM PAGE 1

Servants (Dismissal on Conviction) Ordinance 1985. Under this act, a civil servant loses job if he is fined Tk 10,000. Previously this act dictated that a civil servant would lose his job if he is fined more than Tk 1,000 and jailed for six months. This amended act now cleared by the cabinet is awaiting approval of the parliament.

The proposed amended act essentially saves a civil servant from losing his job for contempt of court, which the original act does not.

"We would like to raise questions why the government has taken the initiative to frame a new law on a serious matter like contempt of court when its tenure of office is about to end," said Dr Kamal while talking to The Daily Star at the Supreme Court.

"I was not shown the draft bill but I gathered the essence of this law from newspaper reports. This law mainly aims at reconfiguring penalties for the civil servants. Whose interest is being served by it?"

The renowned jurist observed, "The judiciary is one of the basic pillars of the state and the constitution. To protect it, the issue of contempt of court is there. There are many things to consider before intervening in such a pillar of the state. Before passing this bill in parliament, the government should take opinions from the public, experts, seven former chief justices who are still alive, lawyers of different levels and those who understand this matter. It would be a great mistake not to do this."

Rokanuddin also said he was not shown the draft law although he had asked the law minister to give him a copy. His impression on the proposed law is based on press reports.

"I think there is an ill motive behind the framing of this law, apparently devised to save civil servants from the pitfalls of contempt of court. This is not proper. The law should have been framed in such a way that a civil servant would not dare to go for contempt of court."

He also said the draft is against public interest. If enacted, it will hamper protection of judges. The judges usually issue orders on the civil servants and the law enables them to make sure that the officials obey them. Now, this authority to enforce an order has been compromised.

If payment of Tk 5,000 as fine for contempt of court does not lead to termination of an official's job he can go on violating the orders without

serious consequences, Rokanuddin noted.

But Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said, "The existing law relating to contempt of court does not dictate termination of a civil servant's job, the proposed law also does not have that provision."

The 1985 act on civil servants had provisions for job termination and this is being amended, he added.

"Rather, we have enhanced the penalty for contempt of court to Tk 5,000," the minister said, claiming that the draft law was framed to uphold the image of the judiciary.

"There was no complete law on contempt of court in the past. Now, we have defined what would be considered as contempt of court. The press and the journalists will now know their limits regarding the judiciary and the judiciary will also know its boundary," he pointed out.

Sources said a full-fledged contempt of court act was submitted by the Law Commission to the law ministry but the commission is in the dark whether its recommendations are accepted or not.

"Until we have a copy of the draft law, we cannot say if our recommendations are accepted," said a commission source seeking anonymity.

Justice Kamal said, "I have not seen the draft. So, I can't make any comment."

Sources said in framing the draft law, the government did not discuss definitions of contempt, penalties and other aspects of the law with any stakeholders. It was simply framed by bureaucrats.

Inspector General of Police Shahudul Haque was fined Tk 2,000 or face a jail term of one month for contempt of court in 2004.

Besides, nine bureaucrats are facing a contempt charge in the Supreme Court for distorting the court's 12-point directive on the separation of the judiciary from the executive.

In another contempt of court case, top four bureaucrats of the government – principal secretary to the prime minister, finance secretary, law secretary and establishment secretary – stand accused for non-compliance with the 12-point directive.

# Hasina vows

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now. "Please take those accounts," she requested.

On the recent civil society move to nominate honest and eligible candidates for the upcoming general election, Hasina said this is also included in the reform proposals of the 14-party opposition combine. The AL chief also asked the civil society members to publish a list of those they consider as honest and eligible candidates. "If needed, we will help you publish that list," she offered.

The AL president termed the Election Commission (EC) flunky and said any free, fair and neutral election cannot be held under this EC.

"The government would have to materialise our reform proposals to bring efficacy in the caretaker government and the Election Commission," Hasina said.

She directed the Jubo League workers to remain alert so that the government cannot omit their names in the voter list and snatch their votes in the next election.

The AL chief also demanded an end to killing of people, corruption and price reduction of everyday essentials immediately. She cautioned Prime Minister Khaleda Zia that she would not be able to hang on to power by suppressing mass movements by imposing section 144, using police and killing people.

"The prime minister has cordoned herself off by imposing section 144 around the Prime Minister's Office... [But] You cannot protect your power this way," she declared.

Hasina said they would stage today's sit-in demonstration in front of the PMO and observe country-wide hartal tomorrow to press home their reform demands and protest the killings at Kansat.

Warning the prime minister that she could not protect her chair through repression and torturing like in 1996, the opposition leader directed her party leaders and workers to give a good lesson by making today's sit-in programme and tomorrow's hartal a complete success.

The former prime minister said if voted to power her party will keep the prices of essentials within the reach of ordinary people, root out the militancy and build a peaceful Bangladesh.

She also pledged herself to retrieve the public money "siphoned abroad by the ruling alliance men" and initiate projects for employment of the youth.

She called on the police administration not to harass the opposition leaders and workers on orders of "the corrupt rulers". Besides, the opposition leader asked the police and the armed forces whether they

would protect the prime minister and her family members who, she said, have killed thousands of people and looted crores of taka.

She asked the Jubo League workers to intensify the current anti-government movement.

Criticising the prime minister, Hasina said all she [the prime minister] did in the last four and half years was hiking the prices of essentials. The AL chief alleged that the alliance rule has been pushing the country towards a state of ruin.

She accused the government of tarnishing the country's image by rampant corruption, terrorism, human rights abuse and repression on the journalists.

Referring to the purchase of 16 fighter planes at a cost of \$ 118 million, she said the planes actually cost \$ 93 million and "Hawa Bhaban men have pocketed the remaining \$ 25 million".

Presided over by Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak, the rally was addressed among others by AL leaders Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Obaidul Quader, and Jubo League General Secretary Mirza Azam.

## Opposition plans

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She said the opposition has become worried to realise that they have no hope in the future as people are in favour of the politics of development, production, peace and prosperity pursued by the 4-party alliance government.

Khaleda said if BNP and alliance return to power at the next general election, Bangladesh would undergo a great change in all fields.

Her government is committed to eliminating all forms of terrorism, she said, adding that the perpetrators of bomb attacks, including their kingpins, have been arrested and the remaining few will also be caught and tough punishment meted out to them.

Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Huq, PM's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury, Begum Sarwan Rahman MP, State Minister for Public Works Alamgir Kabir, Rajshahi Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, Deputy Minister for Land Ruhul Quddus Talukdar Dulu and Mozzamel Huq, among others, addressed the meeting presided over by local MP Kazi Golam Morshed.

# Boycott of Test match

FROM PAGE 1

Assistant Commissioner (supply) Enam and other police personnel involved in the attack, their immediate arrests and trial under the CrPc Act, judicial inquiry into the incident, better treatment for critically injured photographer Anurup Titu in Dhaka or abroad, and proper compensation for all the victims.

The journalists rejected once again the one member inquiry committee comprising the deputy inspector general of police and decided to file a case in the court.

At least 20 journalists were injured when unruly police led by the DC (port) on Sunday started to beat them without any provocation during the first day of the second test match between Bangladesh and Australia at Chittagong Divisional Stadium. The attack drew widespread condemnation both from home and abroad. The international media also condemned the