Iran president writes to Bush with proposal to ease nuke tension

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadineiad has written to US President George W. Bush to "propose new ways" to resolve tensions between the two arch enemies, Tehran announced yesterday.

The historic move brings an end to a 26-year-old break in official toplevel contacts with Washington, and comes amid US calls for sanctions and even the threatened use of force over Iran's disputed nuclear programme.

"President Ahmadinejad has written a letter to George Bush. which is to be handed to the Swiss embassy," government spokesman Gholam Hossein Elham told report-

It is the first time an Iranian president has been known to officially communicate with an American president since Washington and Tehran cut off diplomatic relations in 1980. "In this letter, while analysing the

world situation and finding the roots of the problems, he has proposed new ways for getting out of the existing vulnerable world situation,' the spokesman said.

Foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told the ISNA news agency that "once the American president has received the letter, its content will be made public", while a source in Ahmadinejad's office told AFP the letter would be handed to the Swiss embassy on Monday.

The Swiss government assumed the representation of US interests in Iran in 1981, and has since been acting as a conduit for messages between the two arch-enemies.

The United States and Iran are at loggerheads over Tehran's nuclear programme, which Washington suspects is a cover for ambitions to build atomic weapons.

Bush has not ruled out taking military action against the Islamic republic over its nuclear work, and Washington also accuses Iran of supporting "terrorist" groups across the Middle East.

News of the letter came ahead of a meeting in New York of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany in a bid to map out a common strategy to force Iran to halt sensitive nuclear fuel work.

The meeting will coincide with continuing bargaining in Security Council on a Franco-British draft resolution that would legally require Iran to freeze all uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities.

Tehran vowed Sunday it would refuse to comply with such a resolution, warning the diplomatic crisis was heading toward a "confronta-

which 52 Americans were held for

444 days

According to diplomatic sources subsequent communications via the Swiss embassy in Tehran have invariably been between the Iranian foreign ministry and the US State Department -- far below the presidential level.

Diplomats from both sides have also held confidential meetings in the past, most recently following the defeat of Afghanistan's Taliban in 2001 and prior to the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003.

A Western diplomat in Tehran, speaking on condition of anonymity said news of the letter was a "diplomatic bombshell"

'This has been on the cards. in as such that the Iranians have been trying to make contact with the Americans for some time. But up until now these contacts have been secretive and not at a particularly senior level, and have not got any where in so far as the root of the problem is still there," said the diplomat.

"But this is a huge step. Of course it depends on what nmadinejad has actually written. Is there an opening for direct talks for example, or is it just an anti-American rant?" the diplomat

"We'll also have to see how the Americans respond, bearing in mind that Ahmadinejad is none too popular in Washington at the moment.

In an interview published Sunday, Bush said he preferred a "diplomatic solution" to the nuclear crisis and Iran's threats against Israel, but said that "all options should be placed on the table including military action.

When Ahmadinejad says "that he wants to destroy Israel, the world should take that very seriously,

Bush has already lumped Iran into an "axis of evil", a view that has only been reinforced by Ahmadineiad's call for Israel to be "wiped off the map" and his view of the Holocaust as a "mvth".

in the morning, Killing Harun on the spot and injuring Mannan,

Mannan, who managed to flee with bullet wounds, was admitted to a hospital in Rangour in a critical When contacted, Lt Col Rafig

Ahmed of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) confirmed the incident. BDR sent a protest note to its Indian counter-

entered Chowka village of Shibganj upazila and kidnapped two farmers

said the BSF troops of Shukdevpur outpost entered the village at about 2:30pm and kidnapped Mozammel Haq and Abdul Latif.

Compromise on stance

quarters in Brussels on sending election observers. Some 90 observers came to

Bangladesh to monitor the last general elections in 2001 but he much more.

Bangladesh. "I am not optimistic but hope for a consensus among the political parties He went on, "You need to try hard

to work out a consensus as there is acceptable to those who matter."

not free and fair and the results are has withdrawn from some countries but it is decided on a case by case

Agreement with Bangladesh where functioning of democracy, human rights and good governance etc are major elements of cooperation, he mentioned.

On corruption in Bangladesh, both Anwar Choudhury and Frowein termed it a 'cancer' and a 'silent bacteria' that obstructs economic growth and investment. They called for fighting hard to eliminate corruption that leaves an adverse impact on the economy and image of the

"Whatever mechanism

perception index of the Transparency International," Frowein said.

Anwar Choudhury said, "If

Kuwait agrees

teams soon to identify the areas of investment, increase trade volume and tap business potentials for the benefit of the two peoples.

About the construction of third Karnaphuli Bridge, the Kuwaiti side has assured to expedite the process of disbursement of fund from Kuwait Fund to construct the bridge.

issues of mutual interests and regional and international issues of common concern during the talks.

nvestment potential and incentives offered by her government for foreign investors, Khaleda assured special preferential treatment for Kuwaiti investors.

Khaleda said Kuwait can import quality products like pharmaceuticals, RMG, accessories, footwear, ceramic, handicrafts, iute and iute goods, leather and leather goods and cement from Bangladesh at competitive prices.

The Bangladesh side expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti government for assistance in Bangladesh's development efforts and providing employment opportunities to a large number of Bangladeshi work force.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Kamaluddin Siddiqui, Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin and Bangladesh Ambassador in Kuwait Nazrul Islam Khan were present at the talks from Bangladesh side while three deputy prime ministers, energy minister, labour minister and trade minister were present from Kuwaiti side.

Thai court FROM PAGE 16

campaigns by fringe groups.

The most serious issue was that the ballot booths were placed in a way to compromise voting privacy despite the fact that the constitution stipulate that the voting has to be direct and secret.

When the meeting of judges began in the morning, about 20 protesters standing outside the courtroom called on members of the Election Commission to resign.

The sitting of the judges came after the King suggested senior judges from the Supreme Court, Supreme Administrative Court and Constitution Court to launch deliberation on a series of cases to determine the legality of the election which has led to widespread political confusion.

In an audience with newly appointed judges to the Supreme Court and Supreme Administrative Court, the King said it was the duty of the judiciary to find a way out of the country's looming constitutional crisis, caused by a highly peculiar snap election held earlier this

JS session

The AL lawmaker also urged the government to take step so that the CEC and the "controversial" election commissioners resign. "There will be no free and fair election with the present election commissioners," he added.

Taking part in the debate, Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain urged the opposition to file complaints with the EC if they have reservations about the draft list.

The minister requested the EC to go for a massive campaign by displaying the lists at grassroots level so that the left-out eligible people could get their names listed and at the same time the fake names, if there be any, are excluded.

"The list should be displayed at all Union Parishad offices," he said.

The minister however expressed doubt about the census report and said, "We have been hearing the number of total population 14 crore for the last two years.

AL lawmakers Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Mohammad Nasim and Krishak Sramik Janata League lawmaker Kader Siddiqui also criticised the voter list and demanded the government's statement in the House on the list.

Selim said the CEC had taken unilateral decision to prepare a fresh voter list ignoring the directives of the High Court. He asked the government to take legal action against the CEC for wasting huge public money for preparing such a "fake" voter list.

Referring to the draft voter list, he said. "The list shows there are only four voters in two villages of Rajbari

"Even many of our lawmakers have not been listed." he added.

Mohammad Nasim said, "The chief election commissioner has deprived genuine voters of their constitutional rights and included about two crore fake voters to help the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition to rig the polls."

He demanded revision of the previous voter list, which was prepared in 2001 in line with the High Court directives.

Ballot backlash

The proposal is also expected to recommend providing oil in subsidised price for irrigation and the poor, as is done in India.

Last week Finance Minister Saifur Rahman said a decision on oil price adjustment would come within A decision on this issue is not

easy to take, he remarked. He said the government has to consider the macro- and micro-economic effects of a price hike and discuss the issue threadbare with the people concerned, and then a proposal in this regard will be sent to the prime minister.

The multinational donor agencies -- particularly the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) -- have for long been asking the government to raise the oil prices to maintain macroeconomic A visiting IMF mission took up the

matter with the finance ministry. The mission argued the poor enjoy only 10 to 12 per cent of the subsidy given to keep oil prices low. Actually the rich are getting the lion's share of the subsidy benefits.

the IMF suggested the government could increase the financial assistance to the poor offered under the programmes like the allowance for the elderly, food for work etc. sources said.

quarterly economic update prescribed an immediate oil price hike. if the government wants to avoid a macroeconomic disaster. The WR too has been hammering on the issue for long In a pre-budget discussion

finance minister to raise the oil prices. Otherwise, they cautioned, the caretaker government would

recently, the country's leading

economists also advised the

The government could have raised the prices last year, a senior minister told The Daily Star. The prices of essential commodities, which are already on the rise, would skyrocket if oil prices were hiked now, he argued.

Besides, the minister feared, raising oil prices just a few months before the election might prove suicidal.

Following the top-level negative signal, the energy ministry has adopted some measures to reduce the petroleum consumption by plugging in smuggling and restricting supply. Bangladesh imports a major

chunk of its petroleum products from Kuwait. The energy ministry has sent a proposal to the Kuwait government for paying half of the oil price on opening of the letter of credit and deferring payment of the rest by six months.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia went to Kuwait yesterday on a two-day visit. She will discuss this proposal along with other issues with her Kuwaiti counterpart, sources said.

The government has already borrowed \$250 million from Standard Chartered Bank. In addition to this bank loan, if Kuwait accepts the government's proposal for deferred payment, the caretaker government as well as the next elected government will be in serious crisis, a Bangladesh Bank (BB) source observed.

He also pointed out that the public sector borrowing has already shot up significantly, due to lack of price adjustment of oils. If the government does not adjust the prices now, it will have to arrange for the subsidy directly from the budget. But, given the current revenue situation, it does not seem feasible for the government to manage that subsidy after meeting its budgetary expenditures. In that case, the government will have no option but to meet the deficit by commercial

IMF team seeks

ing the government for raising oil prices for quite some time but the government has not responded to it. The coming elections as well as fears that the opposition movement might get a momentum if oil prices are hiked once again have put the government in a serious dilemma.

Mission leader Rambaugh, when asked if their visit and meeting with the leader of the opposition are related to oil prices, avoided a direct reply, saying they will talk about it at the press conference due today. On insistence from reporters, he simply said "Just to confirm our continued support for Bangladesh in the future and that we will continue with any government in power to support and help the people of Bangladesh."

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil. Abul Hossain and Kazi Zafarullah. among others, were present at the

Muhit said they told the IMF mission that good governance is more important than raising fuel

The recent upward movement of

inflation is hurting the poor most. Failures in the supply sector, price hike of different items in the international market, toll collection and profit making are the main four reasons for such unusual rise of the inflation, he explained. Fuel is used by farmers and the

poor, so their condition must be taken into account while raising the prices, he said.

the mission reforms in the PRSP. There are weaknesses in the PRSF and if AL goes to power changes will be brought in it," Muhit added.

Delhi may decide

FROM PAGE 1 Yangon.

Under the proposal, 950 kilometres of pipeline was expected to run through the Arakan state in Mayanmar via the Indian states of Mizoram and Tripura before entering Bangladesh to reach Kolkata.

"We have nothing to do if India or Myanmar does not invite us to join the pipeline. We have intentions to join the pipeline but India should consider the trade deficit between the two countries and other bilateral issues," a Bangladeshi high official of the ministry of energy said.

The official added that Bangladesh could not initiate any step by itself to join the lucrative pipeline project despite the fact that t would bring in between US\$125 million and \$500 million per annum as transit fees from both India and Mvanmar.

India, which has been facing competition from China in importing gas from Myanmar, presented eight alternative routes including one via the north-eastern part of the country excluding Bangladesh.

The pipeline will also have the provision for transporting gas from developing gas fields in Tripura and Assam. sources said. The detailed feasibility report

(DFR) for a Myanmar-India gas pipeline bypassing Bangladesh and pre-feasibility report on other proposed alternative routes were prepared with the help of SUZ Tractebel of Brussels (Belgium) as technical consultants. Bringing gas through

Bangladesh had become a thorny issue, which had in fact stalled the whole process and led to Myanmar favourably considering a request for large gas supplies to China. Bangladesh insisted that the trilateral MoU includes its demands for using the Indian transmission

network for bringing power from

Bhutan and Nepal, use of Indian

territories for transporting goods to

Nepal and Bhutan, and that New

Delhi reduces the \$2.5 billion trade

India said these are bilatera issues and suggested alternatives India feels some trade issues

The Myanmar government is expected to get a detailed feasibility report on the gas transmission issue and other aspects of the deal commissioned by it. Myanmar announced that it has

2.88 to 3.56 trillion cubic feet of gas. reserves in its gas fields on which India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd (ONGC), GAIL India Ltd, the Myanmar government, and Daewoo Company of Korea have ownership.

Fishing cat

according to district forest office sources.

Locals said earlier tea garden workers of Kazi and Kazi Tea Estate of Tetulia in Panchagarh noticed four fishing cat cubs at the estate and caught three of them alive. One died under the foot of a worker.

Sarder Shahajan Siraj and Ataur Rahman of the tea estate fed the cubs milk during their stay there. Mokbul Hossain, an employee of

the estate, noticed the mother of the cubs roaming around Sunday afternoon. "The mother of the cubs called for them the whole night at the garden," he told The Daily Star. MA Rashid, a Panchagarh forest

in every sector, he added BTF President Nazibul Bashar

On March 16 two other fishing Maizbhandari.

Writ petitions

Jamaat's election symbol, told The Daily Star that the court rejected the petitions saying "the petitions have no good cause to challenge the election symbols".

Barrister Moksedul Islam and four other lawyers filed the petition on May 2 for writ on the election symbol of Jamaat--a four-party alliance government partner--as the Supreme Court has the same emblem that stands for jus-Advocate Shahadat Hossain

filed another writ petition on Sunday

challenging the validity of a sheaf of

paddy as BNP's election symbol. boat as AL's election symbol, plough as that of Jatiya Party. The petitioner challenged the AL poll symbol boat as it is used in the monogram and flag of the jail guards under the police department, BNP's symbol as a sheaf of paddy is used in the national symbol, and Jativa

Party's symbol plough as it is used in

the monogram of Bangladesh Ansar

The HC said the election symbols are used for a short time during the election period and so, there is no reason that the symbols may "cause harm or...undermine the monogram used by the Supreme Court and other government organi-

Shanir Akhra FROM PAGE 1

Paterbagh could not operate almost all daylong yesterday for lack of electricity supply, adding to the sufferings of the local people.

Meanwhile, Sangram Parishad, a locals' body spearheading the movement for water and power, at a press conference yesterday evening announced a 10-point demand including a permanent solution to water and power shortages in Demra-Shyampur area.

Parishad Convene Moslehuddin Masud among others attended the press conference. At another press conference

called by BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed's son Imran Ahmed Russell at the Jatiya Press Club, supporters of the lawmaker blamed the opposition Awami League (AL) for the attack on him during demonstrations on Dhaka-Chittagong highway on May 5. The speakers, mostly activists of

the ruling party and its front organisations, also blasted the media for "peddling a propaganda" against They said Salahuddin expressed solidarity with the agitating locals

and was coming out of the crowd

after having peaceful talks when the "AL terrorists" assaulted him. "It was an attempt to kill him and tarnish his image for political gains, Advocate Badruddoza, a governing body member of Shahid Zia Girls School and College, said, reading out

a paper at the press conference. The locals who took part in May 5 agitations could not return home in the face of constant threats from the ruling party cadres, who continued patrolling the area round the clock to resist people from speaking out against water and power crises.

Kuwait pledges FROM PAGE 1

Welcoming Khaleda, Sheikh Sabah reiterated his strong desire and commitment to strengthen friendly relations between the two countries.

He expressed satisfaction over the outcome of bilateral talks between Bangladesh and Kuwait.

Govt to pay

FROM PAGE 16 injured victims would get Tk 25,000 each while 600 people with minor injuries Tk 3000 each.

Sources said the list was prepared as per the agreement signed between the government and the Palli Bidvut Unnavan Sangram Parishad on April 16 bringing peace to the region after four months of the people's movement.

The committee comprising acting Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Shibganj Dewan Mohammad Abdus Samad, Chapainawabganj Civil Surgeon Golam Mortuza and Palli Bidyut Unnayan Sangram Parishad convenor Golam Rabbani.

The committee extensively visited Kansat, Abbas Bazar, Bagdurgapur, Guchchhagram, Chalk Kirti, Bahlabari, Bianibazar and Gopalnagar areas to prepapre the

Shibganj UNO said, distribution of the money will begin soon.

Kamal accuses

FROM PAGE 16 corrupt government and vote for

honest and competent candidate in the next general elections. Mentioning the escape of ruling

party lawmaker Salauddin from the enraged crowd at Demra recently, BDB President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury said that there is no instance in the history of the nation that a lawmaker was chased by the common people. Now the people of the country

will chase the Khaleda-Nizami coalition government for their failure

Maizbhandari, BDB Secretary General Major (retd) Abdul Mannan and Organising Secretary Mahi B accused in six criminal cases, Chowdhury MP also spoke at the rally that was presided over by BTF including three for murder. presidium member Habibul Bahar

72kg more heroin

able and other furniture destined for Southampton port on October 12 last year. The receiver of the consignment n the UK was a company named

The British customs managed to detect the smuggling.

Later, the British High Commission n Mumbai informed the matter to the Directorate of Customs Intelligence and Investigation, Bangladesh. The authorities concerned, however, started foot-dragging to carry out a complete investigation and detect the

When contacted, Ibrahim Fatemi,

special superintendent of police, CID, who leads investigation into the smuggling of 75.5kg heroin, said they are yet to receive any order from the authorities to investigate the freshly suspected smuggling of 72kg heroin. Meanwhile, another source of the Directorate of Customs Intelligence

and Investigation yesterday said the authorities formed a team on Sunday to investigate the matter. The team has already sought for documents from the customs office at Chittagong Port through which the consignment of furniture was shipped to the UK. **NAZMUL HAIDER**

REMANDED FURTHER

Former BD Foods official Nazmul Haider Bhuiyan was shown arrested in the case filed with the Sutrapur Police Station on Saturday in connection with smuggling of 54kg heroin to the UK in a consignment of floor tiles.

The CID yesterday produced him before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka with a

Chief whip's son FROM PAGE 16

threats to him over phone, Sohel added. The complainant sought secu-

rity, apprehending attacks on him and his family. Another criminal case was filed on March 29 against Paban on charges of extortion and attempts to

grab a house using forged docu-

ments.

Earlier on February 28 last year. he was held for firing on a fax-phone shop owner in the city's Kotwali area and a case in that connection is still pending with a Dhaka court.

Besides, four other extortion cases were filed against Paban and his brother Abdul Hamid Dablu in September the same year.

Gaibandha by-polls FROM PAGE 16

The district administration has taken a number of steps to conduct the polls smoothly. They identified 15 polling stations as vulnerable and 40 others as risky. The administration has deployed 155 magistrates, 2,845 policemen, mobile patrol teams of the army and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR). They also launched eight mobile courts to ensure the bypolls run smooth.

A 10-member election observer am led by ABM Ruhul Amir Hawlader, secretary general of Jatiya Party, told the press yesterday if the by-election is anything like the one in Magura, greater agitation programme will follow. He also said they will appreciate the ruling alliance government if the polls were

conducted in a free and fair manner. The parliament seat had fallen vacant after the sudden death of BNP lawmaker Abdul Mottaleb

2 killed

FROM PAGE 16

escape.

9:00 am yesterday.

Raju's cohorts opened fire on them prompting the elite force to fire back. Raiu fell in the line of fire while trying to flee and died on the spot. His accomplices managed to

A shutter gun and two rounds of bullets were recovered from the scene. Kafrul police sent the body to

Dhaka Medical College Hospital

(DMCH) morgue for an autopsy at

Four cases were filed against Raiu at Kafrul Police Station, including one for murder and two for robbery, police said. A correspondent from Jhenidah reports: Atiar Rahman alias Palash, regional leader of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party

(PBCP-Janajuddho) was killed during a gunfight between police and his cohorts at Jadabpur upazila of the district. Tipped off, a Shailakupa police team arrested Atiar from near

Joyonti Nagar DM College on

Sunday. Following leads extracted from him during interrogation, police took him to Milemari village at around 1:15am to recover hidden arms. As they reached near a forest of the village, Atiar's accomplices opened fire on them forcing the law enforcers to retaliate, police said.

Atiar was caught in the 'crossfire" when he attempted to flee. He died on the spot. Police retrieved two pipe guns and five bullets from the spot.

The body was sent to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital. According to police, Atiar of

Tiniarputa village of Harinakundu upazila of the same district was an

prayer for 10 days' remand. The court granted a remand of five days.

The CID filed the case against Zafar and Abul Bashar, proprietor of Green Haven Enterprise. The two are being quizzed by the CID on remand.

AL letter

impossible to sit in a dialogue without

He said he hopes the talks wil finally get underway and both the parties will have to make sacrifices so

at the discussion proves fruitful. "We did not dictate who should be in their [opposition] committee, and they too should not tell us who should

Jalil in his letter said, "As you did not accept the opposition's request for not accommodating any communal or anti-liberation forces or patrons of militants in the proposed committee, it seems the government is not interested in a dialogue."

"We sent five names from the

talks as early as possible. But the names you proposed have dismissed the expectation of the nation," the letter "We want to clearly say that you have included in the committee anti-

iberation elements, war criminals and people involved in extremism. And it is not acceptable in principle to the people," the letter reads. 'This kind of committee won't be able to have a fruitful discussion, and

Calling on the government to leave the [religious] fundamentalists and militant patrons out of the committee, ne said otherwise the opposition parties will realise their demand for reforms through agitation on the

dence and handed over the letter. Replying to a query, the BNP secretary general said: "I won't say anything about the letter now. We will

make comments.' He declined also to answer whether the BNP would reconsider exclusion of Jamaat from their commit-

Transport strike FROMPAGE 16

said the decision was taken after a meeting between the leaders of road transport owners and workers association and the authorities concerned n Dhaka yesterday. State Minister for Law Shahjahan Omar, BCC Mayor Majibur Rahman

Ziauddin Sikder, secretary of Barisal

Alam Khandoker, secretary of the Ministry of Communications, divisional commissioners of Barisal and Khulna, and leaders of the 44 bus. minibus owners and workers associwere present in the mee held at Railway Bhaban

resolve the problems at Barisal after the HSC examinations, beginning on May 14. The meeting also decided that the

general elections," M Syduzzaman told journalists after the meeting. He

the flow of black money in the upcoming general election," said Dr Debapriya Bhattachariya, membersecretary of the committee. He said the delegation and NBR officials discussed the possibility of cancelling candidacies if inconsis-

The 27-member Nagorik Committee was formed for preparing a vision for Bangladesh and to pursue honest and competent candidates in the next general election. The committee was formed with joint initiatives of nongovernment think tank Centre for Policy Dialogue, The Daily Star and

The committee will also hold

such dialogues with the Anticorruption Commission and Election Commission. The delegation also suggested making it mandatory to submit

the daily Prothom Alo.

of life styles along with the tax returns of those who would compete in elections of public representa-The NBR chairman underscored the need for registration of political

the general election.

demand for an end to harvesting indirect benefits by the elected officials while in power, he told the

at gunpoint. Washington has not had direct diplomatic relations with Iran since April 1980 following the seizure of the US embassy in Tehran in 1979 in

He said a technical mission comprising 3- 4 experts would visit Bangladesh soon to check if the condition is right for free and fair elections, and advise the EC head-

said this time the number will be Speaking at the press conference, Anwar Choudhury said the next election is very crucial to the FU's future relations with

no other option for you. The future elections must be free, fair and Asked whether the EU would withdraw its aid programmes in Bangladesh if the next elections are not acceptable. Frowein said the EU

The EU has Cooperation

country silently. Bangladesh has like Anti-Corruption Commission, it has to show that things are changing. It is not good to be on the top of most corrupt countries for five consecutive times on

corruption is not tackled, you are stopping us as EU.

FROM PAGE 16

In C'nawabganj, BSF personnel Confirming the incident, BDR

Newly appointed German Ambassador Meyke said it is important to create a congenial climate for trade and investment in Bangladesh. A high-powered German trade delegation would be arriving in Bangladesh on May 20

commissioner said it is true that the EU countries are integrating by sharing trade, free movement and filling up jobs from within Europe to grow a strong economy. He however said the new immi-

gration policy would not harm the

famous curry trade in UK predomi-

nantly run by Bangladeshi Britons.

for a weeklong visit to explore

enhancing trade and investment, he

closes down job opportunities for

non-FU countries, the British high

Asked if the EU's integration

"It is a British business and it is expanding," Anwar Chowdhury said, adding that last year some 6,000 Bangladeshis went to UK. "People are also going on different schemes like working holiday." The British envoy said Britain

has no obligation to the world to

receive migrants. It would recruit

work force on the basis of require-

ment under the point-based immi-

gration policy. Earlier in his opening remarks, Frowein said the EU is a leading voice in world affairs and wields significant influence through the collective voice of its members. It is a voice, which has been placed at the service of responsible multilateralism.

The EU's next country strategy paper (2007-13) for Bangladesh would focus on trade, good governance, local government and social sector encompassing education. health and environment, he said. On the occasion of the Europe

Day, Frowein said they will host an

evening of events, including a

fashion show where European

models will wear Bangladesh-

designed outfits and where children

will sing the anthems of the EU and

Bangladesh.

Both sides also discussed the

Mentioning friendly atmosphere,

Instead of subsidising oil prices.

On this issue, the ADB in its latest

find itself in deep trouble. However, government sources said almost all the senior ministers excepting Saifur Rahman are dead against any rise in fuel prices.

Earlier, such missions never met the leader of the opposition. Source said the IMF is pressuris-

"We have also discussed with

to address Bangladesh's concerns. that Dhaka wants to link with the project can be diplomatically tack-

FROM PAGE 16

official, said the 15-day-old cubs appear to be a rare fishing cat breed and they rarely survive in captivity.

cat cubs were captured at Dangirhat of the upazila but they died as the forest department and the district livestock department failed to take any initiative to save them.

legitimate consignment of wooden

we have in ours," Bhuiyan said.

Awami League on behalf of the 14party on April 16 so that we could start

nstead will kill time and give rise to

unexpected dispute and bitterness,

Jalil observed in the letter.

Earlier, a three-member AL team comprising Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan, SM Kamal and BM Mozammel Haq went to Bhuiyan's official resi-

discuss it in our party forum and then

Bus-Minibus Owners Association, Sarwar, BRTC Chairman Taimur

It was decided in the meeting that the transport leaders would sit again with the authorities concerned to

BRTC buses will continue to ply the different routes in the southwestern region until the leaders reach a con-

sensus on the issue at the next meeting, transport leaders said. Black money

said influence of black money could be reduced by implementing existing laws. "We think if NBR, ACC (anticorruption commission) and EC work in close collaboration in good faith, we can substantially reduce

tencies are found between the wealth statements submitted to the EC and NBR.

wealth statements and descriptions

parties and audit of party expenditures for bringing transparency in There should be a public