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# The Daily Star

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## Dhaka, Yangon sign accord on repatriation today

# UN involvement likely

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

After four days of debates and deliberations between the diplomats of Bangladesh and Myanmar, the two sides have reached accord and the Foreign Ministers are set to initial an agreement this morning on the immediate return of the Rohingya refugees.

"We've made a breakthrough... we have finalised an agreement", Additional Foreign Secretary A H Mahmud Ali told The Daily Star yesterday.

Ali, who led the Bangladesh team of officials in the Working Group, also said the agreements to be signed today "will take care of our concerns in all areas" but refused to elaborate.

A supplementary agreement containing details of the 'physical arrangements' will also be signed today by the ambassadors of the two countries.

It is believed that the Myanmar side has also agreed to the proposal of involving a UN body like UNHCR in the repatriation.

Bangladesh Foreign Ministry officials, when asked, declined to comment on the issue.

The accord signing ceremony, scheduled at 9 am in the morning at the state guest house Meghna, will be followed by a press conference where the two Foreign Ministers are to answer reporters' queries.

According to sources, the supplementary agreement deals with the details of the repatriation, such as who would get priority and in what number.

Sources also say that the repatriation will start soon and a schedule has also been prepared but officials declined to give a specific date.

A 14-member Myanmar delegation led by Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaaw flew in Dhaka Thursday and held first round of formal talks Friday with Bangladesh side led by Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman. Myanmar delegation includes Information Minister and member of the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council Brig Gen Myo Thant, Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury and Minister of State for Relief Lutfur Rahman Khan.

At the first round of formal discussion, a working group comprising senior officials of the two sides was formed to frame the modalities of repatriation.

Pursuing a permanent solution Dhaka officials kept insisting the visitors at the negotiating table that the United Nations be made a party to the process of repatriation. The host officials also pleaded that the world body's involvement should be extended up to the resettlement phase.

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## Mojaddedi fails to turn up in Kabul

# Rival Mujahideen ignore Pak ceasefire call

KABUL, Apr 27: A transitional council to take power in Kabul failed to turn up as expected Monday in Kabul, where heavy fighting raged despite a ceasefire agreement announced by Pakistan, reports AFP.

Today marked the 14th anniversary of the communist coup here in 1978 which triggered the Soviet invasion of 1979.

Najibullah Mojaddedi, son of the transitional council's leader, told reporters at the airport that a transport plane which landed empty should have carried his father Sibtullah and the rest of the 51-member council. "They should arrive in a couple of days," he said, without giving a reason why the council members were not aboard.

The council set off for war-torn Kabul early Monday in a 100-vehicle convoy from Peshawar, the northwestern Pakistani city which for 14 years of war served as a base to a loose seven-party Mujahideen alliance, and where the Mujahideen agreed on the council last Friday.

Resistance sources had said Mojaddedi could switch to a helicopter or plane for the journey's last leg.

Sporadic bursts of gunfire and artillery thundered in the capital of 1.5 million people, as fighters of Ahmed Shah Masood's Jamiat-i-Islami battled to keep control of Kabul following their entrance into the city on Saturday.

Witnesses reported that at least 40 tanks belonging to the Hezb-i-Islami faction of Masood's rival, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, were rumbling down Logar road to join the fight for Kabul, which began Sunday.

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## Hijackers trade fire with cops: 1 killed

By Staff Correspondent

Police and hijackers exchanged gunshots at Gulshan and Tejgaon Industrial Areas in the city Monday morning leaving one person dead on the spot and another three injured.

Of the victims, Golam Mustafa, 25, was shot dead near Gulshan shooting range while Abdur Rashid, 24, Harun and Mongol Mia, 12, sustained bullet injuries at Tejgaon Industrial Area during the half an hour police chase from Gulshan to Tejgaon.

Golam Mustafa, Abdur Rashid and Harun were identified as hijackers while Mongol Mia was said to be a pedestrian.

Police arrested Abdur Rashid and Harun and sent them to the Dhaka Medical

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THE DECEIVED: A group of Bangladeshi workers arrived at Zia International Airport yesterday from Middle East. About 300 Bangladesh nationals provided with false documents by fake manpower recruiting agents are now ruing their gullibility in Abudhabi jails.

## Cabinet shake-up in a week

By Mahfuz Ullah

A change in the cabinet has become imminent, according to the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) sources.

The change, unlikely to affect the present composition in a big way, is expected to alter the fate of six persons.

The change, planned to make the cabinet more cohesive and the governance of the country more effective, will take place in the first week of May.

Sources close to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said that she had already made up her mind and indicated to the persons she would welcome to the cabinet.

But, as some of the cabinet members were out of the country and the UNICEF Executive Director is to visit the country, the change will come after April 30.

A close associate of the Prime Minister told The Daily Star that the cabinet meeting held yesterday was the last meeting of the incumbent cabinet.

Sources further said that the Prime Minister would be executing the change for some reasons. These were to 'drop some people, whose performances were not satisfactory from the cabinet and rewarding at least one about whom she felt confident, making the characteristics of the cabinet more representative geographically and accommodating some skilled persons in it.

Besides, the Prime Minister needed politically intelligent people in the cabinet who could be of assistance in dealing with the opposition in the coming day.

According to the sources, there would be some element of surprise about persons being

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## TT Energy reaches Chittagong

By Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 27: The Bahama flag carrying oil tanker TT Energy carrying about one lakh tons of crude oil for the Chittagong Eastern Refinery from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) arrived Chittagong Sunday midnight after over two months time behind the schedule.

The drama centering this without tanker chartered by the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation will draw a certain soon with the discharge of the crude oil.

Chittagong Port radio control and BSC sources said the tanker is lying in anchor near Kutubdia 22 miles off Chittagong Port because of higher draught. A lightering vessel Banglar Sawrav has been sent to it for lightering. All preparations have been taken to receive the crude, refinery sources said.

Before heading for Chittagong Port the oil tanker

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### NEWS BRIEFS

**Saudi instruction for visa seekers**  
 Bangladeshi citizens seeking individual visa from Saudi Embassy have been advised to collect their passports from the embassy counters during passport delivery hours on all working days said a press release Monday, reports UNB.

**20 injured in Jhenidah clash**  
 JHENIDAH, Apr 27: At least 20 people were injured and nearly 100 vehicles damaged in clashes between striking rickshawpullers and truck workers in the town today. All the injured were admitted to the Sadar Hospital. The clash erupted when the pullers started angry protest against damage to several rickshaws by truck drivers at the local bus stand Sunday evening, reports UNB.

**Serbs, Muslims start talks**  
 LISBON, Apr 27: Preliminary peace talks between the warring Serb and Muslim communities of Bosnia-Herzegovina began in Lisbon today, the officials said. Croatian leaders were expected to arrive at any moment. A Portuguese foreign Ministry spokeswoman said the Serbian delegation and part of the Muslim delegation were already in Lisbon and were holding bilateral talks, reports Reuters.

**Maldives to host youth confce**  
 COLOMBO, Apr 27: The Indian Ocean atoll nation of Maldives will host the first Commonwealth youth ministers' conference from May 9 to May 12, the Maldivian high commission here announced today. In a statement, it said Maldivian President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom would inaugurate the meeting, which is expected to be attended by youth ministers from all Commonwealth countries, reports AFP.

## \$6m fourth project launched

# Consensus on population control a must: PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Monday launched the Fourth Population, and Health Project, the largest World Bank aided population and healthcare programme in the Third World, with a call for strengthening social movement in favour of the 600 million dollar project, reports BSS.

"We want to open new vista for development against disease, morbidity and malnutrition. We have to become victorious in the movement," Begum Zia said, at the launching ceremony held at Osmani Memorial Hall.

The Prime Minister said her government was giving emphasis on poverty alleviation and expansion of education and healthcare facilities, because, she said, development of human resources was the target of her government.

Begum Zia said the elected government was committed to fulfilling the people's right to healthcare, their constitutional right.

She said, "We want to build up a healthy, strong and active nation."

Begum Zia said at present an elected government was in power and welfare of the people was the central point of all its activities.

She said in this perspective, the launching of the five-year Population and Healthcare Project with foreign aid of more than 600 million dollars had special significance. "It is the manifestation of confidence, noble intention and sympathy of international community with the on-going democratic process of our country," Begum Zia said.

Underlining the need for national consensus on issues of public importance, the Prime Minister said it was natural to have differences of opinion under a democratic system but it was extremely necessary to establish national consensus on issues of public importance. One of such issues is population explosion and healthcare because the very existence of the nation depends on these issues, she said.

Begum Zia said the present government had already reformed the National Population Council with an aim to evolve national consensus on population control. "We want to forge a social movement across the country with all irrespective of party or opinion," she said.

Begum Zia expressed her belief that the social movement could initiate a far-reaching silent revolution regarding widespread healthcare drive, population control and healthcare facilities.

The Prime Minister also underscored the need for faster establishment of health infrastructure throughout the country. Attaining self-reliance in producing health and birth control implements and removing irregularities and mismanagement in the health administration.

Begum Zia also mentioned the "review committee" formed to remove the indis-

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## AL attacks Khulna Press Club

By Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Apr 27: Angry mob today stormed the local press club, injured five journalists, ransacked the VIP room and damaged three vehicles parked in the club premises.

The mob allegedly attacked the Press Club protesting President Abdur Rahman Biswas' schedule visit to the Press club.

The president will inaugurate the three day "Silver Jubilee" programme of the Press Club today.

The attackers also set fire to the gate erected in honour of the President.

The attack was made by a faction of Awami League processionists who earlier held a rally in front of the Press Club, witnesses said.

The journalists injured were identified as Masudur Rahman Rana of Daily Dinkal, Sannar Parvez of Daily Meilat, Afzal Baker of Daily Antrban, Syed Shaif Ahmed of Daily Janata, Anwar Hossain of Daily Antrban. A car driver Abdul Melek was also injured in the melee.

Police vigilance in the town has been strengthened follow-

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## Hasina demands probe into Logang massacre

# Certain quarters behind tribal, non-tribal conflict

LOGANG (Khagrachhari), Apr 27: Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for immediate solution of the longstanding problem in the strife-torn Chittagong Hill Tracts and restore peace and tranquility in the area, reports UNB.

Hasina demanded judicial probe into the April 10 "massacre" at Shantigram in Logang where, she said, an unspecified number of tribal people were killed.

"This bloody self-destructive conflict among brothers must be stopped once for all," she said adding that the government will have to resolve the problem through negotiations and understanding. Otherwise, she warned, the government will be blamed for any further bloodshed in the region.

Hasina who visited Khagrachhari hill district for the first time, went to Shantigram cluster village, mostly inhabited by Chakma tribe, to see the extent of damage caused by the April 10 incident.

Official here said 13 people were killed and 13 others injured in the "tragic" incident but local tribal people claimed the casualty was between 300-1200.

"I have no language to express my indignation at such incident of blood-shedding and violation of human rights", the opposition leader said.

Certain vested quarters are behind the conflict between tribals and non-tribals to fulfil their heinous design, Hasina added.

"There should not be any discrimination between tribals and non-tribals, in the name of Paharis and Bangalees... We are all Bangalees," she said. "Every citizen has equal rights to live in this country which achieved independence through supreme sacrifices of the people of all faiths - Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian."

"Bangladesh belongs to all of them - tribals and non-tribals... they should live together in peace and harmony," she said.

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## Sher-e-Bangla's contributions recalled

Speakers at a discussion in Dhaka yesterday called for materialising the ideals of Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazlul Haq and his dreams for ameliorating the lot of common man, reports UNB.

They paid tributes to the late leader recalling his uncompromising role in the struggle for achieving socio-economic emancipation of the peasant community and the downtrodden.

Sher-e-Bangla Jatiya Smriti Sangsad, Bangladesh Jatiya Byakittito Gobeshona Kendra, Bangladesh Manabdhikar Sangathan and Sher-e-Bangla

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# Mahathir blasts North for polluting environment

From Chapal Bashar

and sound environmental management," he said.

The Malaysian Prime Minister also proposed to establish a Global Fund to support the global greening target, to finance reforestation and afforestation programmes as well as forest rehabilitation and maintenance.

He called upon the global community to target at least 30 per cent of the Earth's terrestrial area to be greened by the year 2000. The world has now 27.6 per cent of its land under forest cover.

Dr Mahathir blasted the rich North for its campaign against logging of tropical timber. Malaysia has already taken a bold stand against such campaign since it affects the country's economy, particularly in Sabah and Sarawak state where timber export is a major source of foreign exchange earnings.

The Prime Minister termed the North's campaign against the logging tropical trees as a clear case of opportunistic use of the environmental issues.

"If not for opportunism, the energy of the environmentalists can be rewardingly focussed on other pollutants," Mahathir said with a call to the rich North to stop use of nuclear fuels for power and to outlaw the manufacture, storage and use of nuclear weapons.

Defending Malaysia's policy in the logging of tropical timber, Mahathir said that Malaysia is fully aware of the role that the tropical forests are playing in preserving the delicate balance in the environment.

"We are also acutely conscious that we are a developing country which needs the wealth afforded by our forests," he said adding, "We do not cut down our trees foolishly."

"If it is in the interest of the rich that we do not cut down our trees then they must compensate us for the loss of income," he said mentioning that Malaysia's extraction of

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**Inaction to ruin SAARC, says Lankan FM**  
 COLOMBO, Apr 27: Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Harold Herat on Monday warned a regional grouping that it was in danger of becoming irrelevant if follow-up action was not taken on important issues, reports AFP.

At a meeting here of Foreign Secretaries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Herat criticised "weakness" in the Integrated programme on Action (IPA) which dealt with the bulk of SAARC activities.

"The weakness of the IPA

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**OIC Secy General due today**  
 Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) Dr Hamid Algabid arrives today (Tuesday) to have a close look of the Rohingya Muslim refugees sheltered in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The OIC Secretary General will be leading a 12-member delegation during his three-day official tour.