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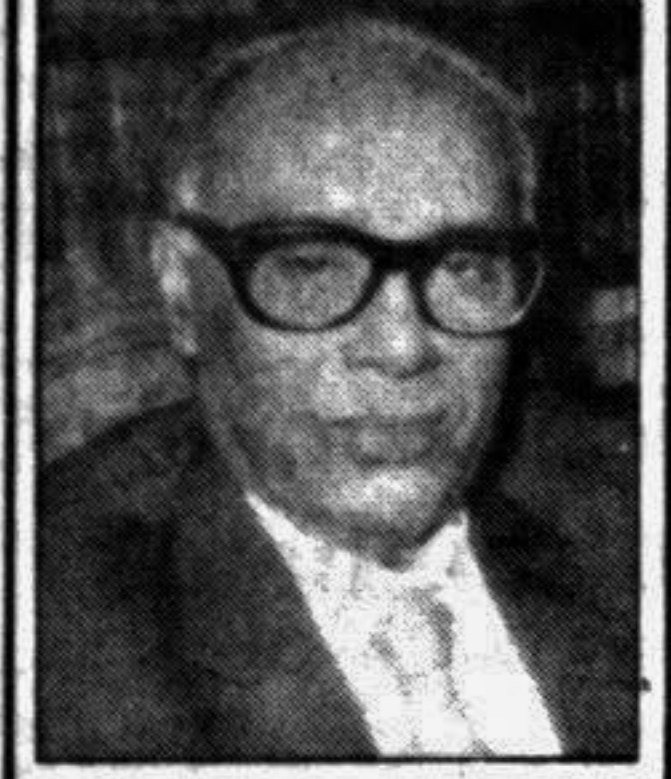
# The Daily Star

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**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Conversation with the Speaker**



**Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali**  
 Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali at last breaks his long silence and recounts the steps he took, the research he did and the various factors he considered before giving his controversial but historic ruling. In an exclusive interview with *The Daily Star*, he elaborates why the two sides failed to sign the agreement they reached even after the submission of the resignation letters by 147 Opposition MPs.  
 The Speaker also explains, in detail, his landmark ruling on the resignation of the Opposition MPs which raised controversy in certain political circles. He speaks frankly about the performance and weaknesses of the Fifth Parliament.  
 Chief Reporter of *The Daily Star*, M Anwarul Haq and Senior Reporter Asiuzzaman talked with the Speaker for about two hours in his Parliament chamber.  
 Read the full text of the conversation in tomorrow's issue of *The Daily Star*.

**Inside Today**

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**STOCK MARKET**

DSE Index	703.00 (+0.41%)
Market capitalization Tk	42.14 billion
Turnover in volume	6127
Turnover in value Tk	8.66 million

**Magazine**

Nagorik: Celebrating 1000th performance; Rereading Shakti Chattapadhyay; Franklin Delano Roosevelt; and Rising Stars; Teens and Twenties; Living; and Weekend Sports Pages 9-16

**Metropolitan**

**Dhaka Day by Day**



**C'wealth Secy Gen again offers mediation**

## Fresh int'l initiative to end pol impasse

By Chapal Bashar

Anyako, is learnt to have also renewed his efforts to solve the crisis. He has reportedly again offered his good offices to the ruling BNP and the mainstream opposition Awami League for facilitating a resumption of dialogue.

According to sources close to the top leaders of both the parties, Chief Emeka has already communicated his willingness to Prime Minister and BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and the AL chief Sheikh Hasina for sending another emissary to Dhaka in a bid to bring back the two sides to the negotiating table.

Chief Emeka discussed the issue with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in London on March 14 during her visit there after attending the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen.

Details of the Khaleda-Emeka discussions in London were not made public, but sources said that Bangladesh's political situation and the Commonwealth's possible mediation in the continuing crisis were among the subjects of the informal talks.

Earlier, the Commonwealth Secretary General also met Sheikh Hasina in London sometime in the third week of February during her short stay there on way back home from

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**Dhaka to seek \$1850m aid in Paris meet**

Bangladesh will seek disbursement of foreign aid of 1,850 million US dollar for 1995-96 financial year, according to an aid memorandum approved by the Cabinet yesterday, reports UNB.

The aid memorandum will be presented in the World Bank-sponsored Bangladesh Aid Group meeting to be held in Paris April 24-26.

A special Cabinet meeting held at Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair approved the memorandum for the annual aid club meeting.

Ministers, state ministers in-charge of different ministries and divisions, cabinet secretary, principal secretary to the prime minister and other secretaries concerned attended the meeting.

The Bangladesh donor group made a commitment of 1,883 million US dollar in the last aid club meeting in Paris.

**Confidential WB report**

## Floods can wash away most Indian dams

NEW DELHI, Apr 6: Most of India's dams are unsafe and could be swept away by floods, according to a confidential World Bank document published in newspapers today, reports AP.

The study comes as hundreds of thousands of villagers forced the World Bank to stop funding the construction of the world's largest irrigation project on the Narmada River in western India.

The bank's survey of 25 dams in four states revealed that none could contain a heavy flood, and the consequences of a dam burst would be catastrophic.

Although the study focussed on only 25 dams, it said rough estimates showed that two-thirds of the country's 947 dams are unsafe. The Pioneer newspaper reported.

Two of the largest dams, the Hirakud and Gandhi Sagar, are particularly badly designed. "The consequences of a dam failure during a major flood would have to be described with some adjective beyond disastrous."

It said the dams were designed using an old formula to calculate how much water would flow into them during floods. It suggested that the government build safety devices.

In 1979, the Machhu II dam collapsed during a flood and killed 2,000 people in western India.

The Save Narmada Movement (NBA), which is spearheading the protest against the dam project in two western states, urged the Indian government to publish details of the report and prepare disaster management plans.

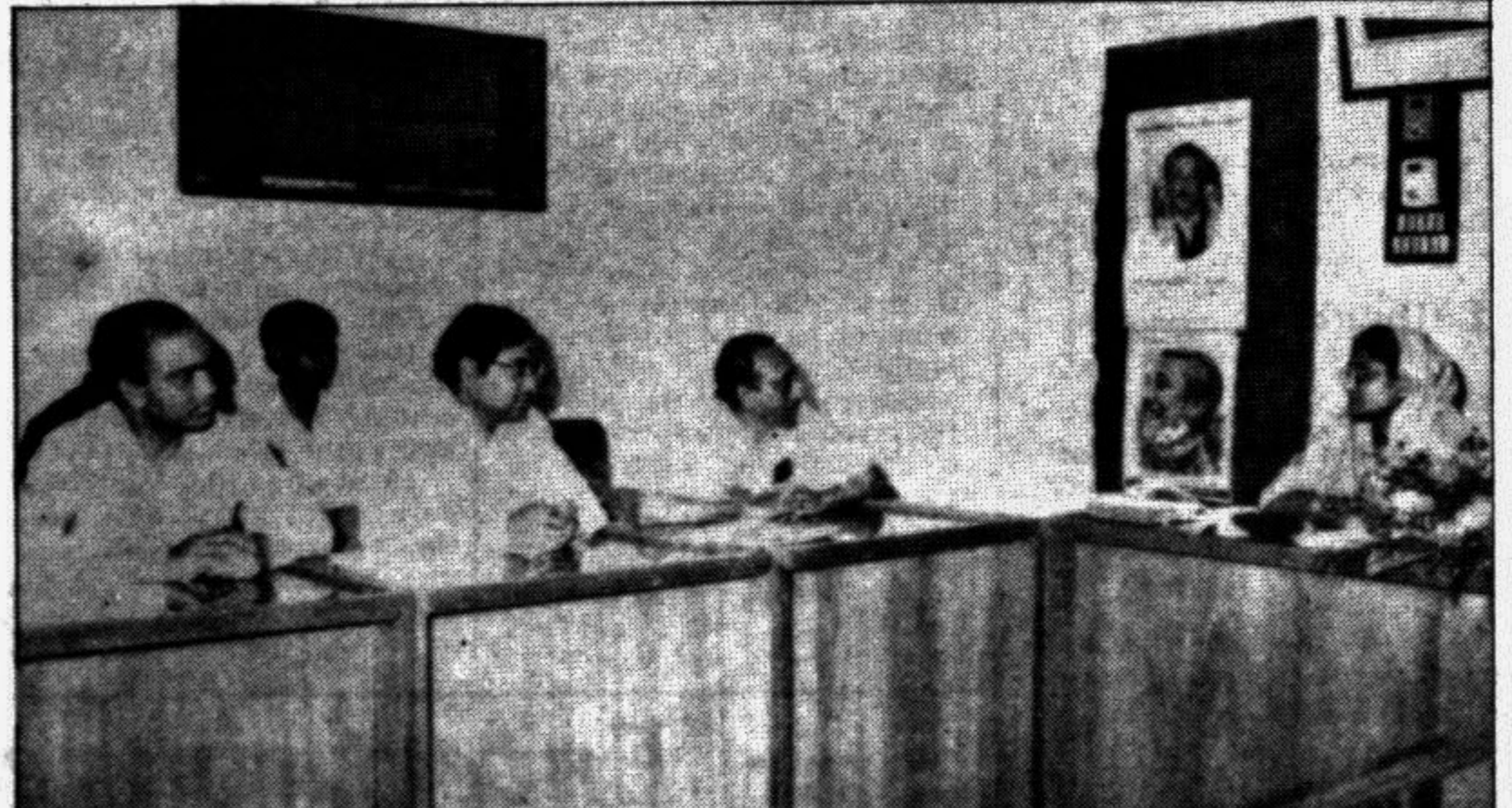
Reuter says, the NBA is campaigning against the construction of a clutch of giant dams straddling three Indian states and partly funded by the World Bank.

In two of these instances, the revised flood discharge values are about 700 per cent or seven times those used in the original design, the report said, according to the NBA.

A World Bank official declined to confirm or deny the report was genuine.

The World Bank earlier declared deeply flawed another huge project, the 5 billion dollar project.

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A business delegation led by Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) president R Maksud Khan (3rd L) called on Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi office in the city yesterday. — DCCI photo

**DCCI leaders meet Hasina**

## Opposition urged to find alternative to hartal

Businessmen yesterday suggested that politicians should resort to an alternative to hartal and blockade to ensure an environment congenial to investment and business, reports UNB.

The suggestion came from a delegation of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) when it made a courtesy call on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi office.

The delegation was led by DCCI president R Maksud Khan.

Hopeing that the politicians would resolve political problems through dialogue, the business leaders suggested that an alternative to hartal and blockade was necessary for a congenial atmosphere to facilitate local and foreign investment.

Sheikh Hasina, on behalf of her party, assured that future programmes would be taken so that the country's economy and business would not be affected, DCCI sources said.

**FBCCI chief for consensus**

President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Salman F Rahman yesterday said "national consensus" for achieving economic prosperity of the country, reports BSS.

"The politicians will have to play the leading role for forging such a consensus on national issues and the politicians themselves will be the worst sufferers if such move fails," he observed.

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**No decision yet on Zahiruddin's replacement**

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is still undecided about whether to choose a third industries minister or let the present state minister remain in charge of the ministry for the rest of the tenure of her cabinet, until early next year, ruling party sources said.

Party stalwarts are in favour of a fresh induction for the vital portfolio consecutively held by two industrialists, the sources pointed out.

A ruling party source, who is a senior minister, said "Begum Zia is considering filling up the post of industries minister with a technocrat," the source said adding "it has

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**Bank services should be unbiased: Saifur**

Bangladesh Bank Governor Khorshed Alam and the secretaries of Finance Division and Banking Division were present at the meeting held at the conference room of the Finance Ministry.

The policy stresses that strict financial discipline be instilled to break the default culture.

It spells out that the relevant legal framework and procedures will be reviewed and modified, and laws be amended to make debt recovery easier, quicker and more practical.

The reiteration of the government's policy about the banking sector came apparent at a meeting of the banking sector.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman focussed on the policy highlights at a meeting with chairmen and chief executives of public, private and foreign banks in Dhaka yesterday.

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**PM leaves for Nepal today**

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia leaves Dhaka today for a two-day official visit to Nepal.

The visit is taking place at the invitation of Nepalese Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikari.

It will be the first visit to Nepal by any head of government since the new government in the Himalayan kingdom was installed following the elections held late last year.

The Prime Minister's trip to Nepal is part of her programme to visit the South Asian countries as the current SAARC chairperson.

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**Probe into Manzur's murder may take another month**

By Staff Correspondent

The investigation into the mysterious killing of Maj Gen Abul Manzur may be completed in a month, an official of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) said yesterday.

"We are at the middle of the investigation. It may take this time to complete the investigation," the source said, requesting anonymity.

The source also said that while filing charge-sheet, the

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**Pilferage drying up Dhaka WASA**

By Sharier Khan

The system loss of Dhaka WASA is presently estimated at around 47 per cent because of a large number of illegal water connections, official sources said.

Dhaka WASA presently provides water connections to over one lakh forty-one thousand households and source claim there could be at least another 25,000 illegal lines.

Sources said, many people, with the help of some unscrupulous WASA employees obtain illegal water connections. In some cases, a person may obtain one connection legally and another illegally for a single household just to ensure a 24-hour water supply and also to cheat the exchequer.

"It is almost impossible to detect illegal lines. The city is growing rapidly and everyday innumerable lines are being installed, both legally and illegally," a WASA official told this correspondent, requesting anonymity.

"Now the utility lines have created such a maze that even a WASA inspector would not be able to identify the illegal lines from the legal ones," he added.

The pipeline network of WASA, set up in 1963, now stands at more than 1292 kilometres. The network is expanding as new lines are being installed regularly.

Of the 47 per cent system loss, 22 per cent is attributed to technical or engineering flaws and the remaining 25 per cent to pilferage.

"The 22 per cent technical system loss is not unusual. The average system loss for technical reasons of water distribution is between 12 and 25 per cent in most of the countries," the official clarified.

He informed the Daily Star that the old part of the capital had innumerable unrecorded connections.

"There are instances that one person obtained a legal line and afterwards, as his family expanded and he built

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**World Health Day today**

The World Health Day will be observed today around the world as well as in the country to create public awareness about healthcare, reports UNB.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas will inaugurate the day's function at the Osmani Memorial Hall at 9:30 am, officials source said.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal ibne Yusuf and Deputy Health Minister Serajul Haq will attend it as special guests.

A walkathen to mark the day will begin at 7:30 am from the Shishu Academy. The Health and Family Welfare Minister, Deputy Health Minister and Health Secretary Syed Ahmed will lead the walkathen.

**Govt okays trial of Taslima**

By Court Correspondent

The government has given its approval, under Section 188 of Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), to start the trial of the case filed against writer Taslima Nasreen.

Public Prosecutor Abdur Rezzak Khan submitted a copy of the approval, signed by Senior Assistant Secretary of the Home Ministry B M Enamul Haq, to the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka, A K M Kamaluddin yesterday.

A case against the now-exiled controversial writer charging her with deliberately hurting religious sentiments of the people is pending trial before the CMM's court. April 15 is the date fixed for the hearing of the case.

Earlier, dismissing a plea on behalf of Taslima Nasreen for quashing the charges against her, the High Court had asked for the government's approval for proceeding with the trial.

**Compensation for workers affected by Gulf war**

## Over 1.5 lakh more cases settled

The Governing Council of the United Nations Compensation Commission has approved payment of compensation to more than 1,62,800 claimants who were forced to flee Iraq and Kuwait during the Gulf War.

According to a UN statement released in Dhaka yesterday, the approval came at a session of the Council that ended on March 23.

The Governing Council gave the approval at its 16th regular session after reviewing the recommendations of a panel of commissioners who deal with individual claims.

With the approval given at this session, the total number of claims so far approved by the Governing Council in three separate categories of individual claims has reached more than 2,20,000, the UN statement added.

Official sources in Dhaka last night confirmed that the awardee claimants included Bangladeshis also, who returned home from Kuwait and Iraq during the war in 1991.

However, the figure of the compensation amount received by Bangladeshis could not be gathered readily.

The Governing Council of the UN compensation commission was established by the Security Council resolution no. 692 (1991).

It considered the cases of claims under three categories — persons forced to flee (category A), persons died or injured (category B) and individual losses of property (category C) — all victims of the Gulf War.

The commission, which operates as a subsidiary of the UN Security Council, began the work of resolving claims in December 1993.

**Fire scare stalks Islambagh slum**

By Staff Correspondent

The quick recurrence of fires has created panic in the area, said Mohammad Serajul Islam of Maurar Tek. A plastic factory worker, Serajul Islam also said that rumours have also gripped the locality.

"On Tuesday, there was a rumour that our slums will be gutted. Allah knows by whom," he said. "We were terrified. However, nothing happened."

A duty officer at the Lalbagh thana said they have posted three policemen at the scene of Monday's fire and deployed one mobile team.

The latest fire in Islambagh could have been easily averted if local people would not have obstructed fire-fighting, according to many fire victims and fire brigade officials.

Talking to *The Daily Star* yesterday, they said the fire was almost doused, but it flared up again when a section of people took away the water hoses from the fire fighters and themselves started sprinkling water.

Initially, the fire engulfed only a few shanties, said Sheikh Bacchu, one of the fire victims.

The fire brigade came and almost controlled it, he said, but people took away the water hoses from the fire fighters to soak their houses.

"At one point, the fire again flared up from the smouldering tin sheets and bamboo poles, and engulfed the whole area," he said.

Six fire units sent during the fire had great difficulties in entering the narrow lanes in Islambagh. The shanties were away from the end of the lanes.

Only a river unit of the fire brigade could operate easily because of the slum's location on the river bank.

Now, the slum people have begun to rebuild their houses with bits and pieces collected from the spoils of Monday's inferno.

A gruel kitchen has been formed by the local ward commissioner to feed those who have no other means for survival.

Local clubs and social welfare organisations have hung banners seeking assistance for the fire victims.

One of the banners said "We do not want relief, we want a wide road."

**BCL leader killed in clash: MM College closed**

From Our Correspondent

JESSORE, Apr 6: A student leader of the Awami League-backed Chhatra League was killed, allegedly by the activists of Chhatra Maitre in the Government MM University College here today.

The college was closed till April 15 following the killing of the student.

Asaduzzaman Rinku, 20, was a first year honours student of history.