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Conversation with the Speaker

ANNOUNCEMENT



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, heelaborates 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 con troversy 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 They store

- Inside Today -

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#### Travails of Sri **Lankan President**

Column: Between the Lines by Kuldip Nayar

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Arms embargo only killing innocents, says **Bosnian PM** 

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## Metropolitan



Out to Play Page 3

## C'wealth Secy Gen again offers mediation

CHAITRA 24, 1401 BS,

# Fresh int'l initiative to end pol impasse

By Chapal Bashar

Anyaoku, 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.

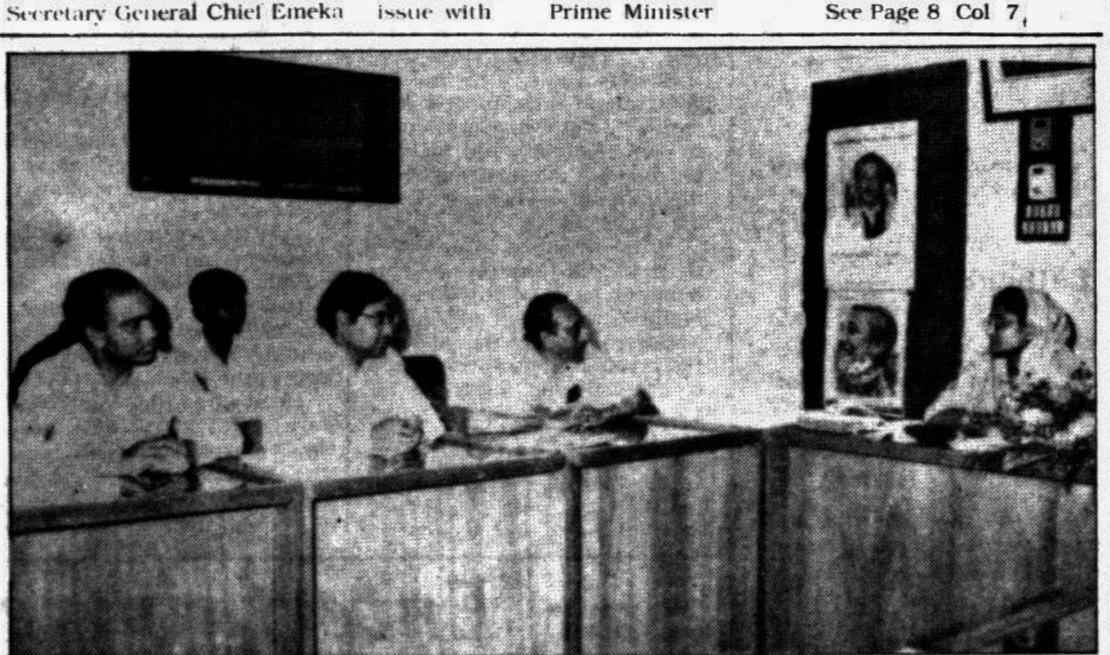
Chief Emeka discussed the issue with Prime Minister

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

See Page 8 Col 7,



A business delegation led by Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) president R Makeud Khair Get L. called on Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi - DCCI photo office in the city vesterday

#### 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

Due to donors' mounting

pressure for ending the ongo-

ing political impasse and be-

hind the scenes efforts by cer-

tain leaders of both the ruling

party and the Opposition, the-

re are tell-tale signs of a

possible rapprochement am-

in Paris for the Bangladesh aid

consortium meeting beginning

April 25, want to see an early

settlement of the political dis-

pute over the issue of a care-

taker government before the

ready been communicated to

Meanwhile. Commonwealth

next polls. This desire has al-

the concerned quarters here.

The donors, who will gather

ong the opposing camps.

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

Hoping 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, DCCl sources said.

Realising the rationale that the businessmen are worried due to the political situation. she said all would have to work unitedly for the interest of economic development of the

Welcoming the newlyelected committee of the DCCI she said. We extended our allout cooperation to the gov ernment after the 1991 general elections and did not go lor agitation for the first three

"We tried to establish par hamentary democracy in the country and to give it an insti tutional shape, but the situation turned critical due to vote dacoity, politicisation and undemocratic attitude and steps of the BNP government," the opposition leader told the chamber leaders

She said they were com pelled to wage a struggle to protect people's voting right After opposition's resignation. both Parliament and government lost legitimacy, she ob

See Page 8 Col 8

#### FBCCI chief for consensus

President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) Salman F Rahman vesterday said "national consensus has no other alternative" for achieving economic prosperity of the country, reports BSS.

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

See Page 8 Col 6

#### Nurses call off strike.

The country-wide strike by the nurses ended last night following an agreement between the government and the two associations of nurses, re-

ports BSS. The nurses had gone on a indefinite strike on March 18 for realisation of 16-point demand of the Diploma Nurses' Association and Diploma Student Nurses Union.

> A meeting to end the strike See Page 8 Col 6

#### \$1850m aid in Paris meet Bangladesh will seek dis-

Dhaka to seek

bursement of foreign aid of 1.850 million US dollar for 1995-96 financial year, according 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.

#### 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 minfor 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 fill ing up the post of industries minister with a technocrat, the source said adding "it has See Page 8 Col 5

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

By Staff Correspondent

The investigation in to the mysterious killing of Maj Gen Abul Manzur may be completed in a month, an official of the Criminal Investigation Depart ment (CID) said vesterday.

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

The source also said that while filing charge-sheet, the See Page 8 Col 4

#### F-6 crash: Body of Flt Lt Aminur recovered

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Apr 6: Police early this morning recovered the body of Flight Lieutenant Aminur Rahman, 24, who died in a plane crash near Sandwip channel Wednesday noon.

The F-6 fighter crashed at noon and sank into Bay water during routine exercise. A joint search operation by

See Page 8 Col 8

the river Buriganga are wor-

ried over fires that have rav-

aged the area repeatedly. And

the slum-dwellers say they

would not take any more

A devastating fire at the Is-

lambagh slum on Monday gut-

ted more than 300 tin-and-

bamboo made shanties and left

Only 15 days before that

another fire at the slum left

many injured and about 300

Lalbagh police, however,

said that there was nothing

suspicious about the fires in Is-

lambagh. Those were simply

had little effect on the poor

residents of the slum who are

But the police assurance

three people killed.

accidents, they said.

shanties burnt.

dents and arson.

chance.

## Floods can wash away most Indian dams

NEW DELHI, Apr 6: Most of newspaper reported. India's dams are unsafe and Two of the largest dams, 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 twothirds of the country's 947

dams are unsafe. The Pioneer

Confidential WB report

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 de-

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 disas-

ter 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.

Adhikari.

The World Bank earlier declared deeply flawed another

huge project, the 5 billion dol-See Page 8 Col 8

PM leaves

for Nepal

today

By Staff Correspondent

Khaleda Zia leaves Dhaka today

for a two-day official visit to

the invitation of Nepalese

Prime Minister Manmohan

Nepal by any head of govern-

ment since the new govern-

ment in the Himalayan king-

dom was installed following

the elections held late last

to Nepal is part of her pro-

gramme to visit the South

Asian countries as the current

See Page 8 Col 7

World Health

Day today

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 Osmany Memo-

rial Hall at 9:30 am, officials

Minister Chowdhury Kamal

Ibne Yusuf and Deputy Health

Minister Serajul Haq will at-

day will begin at 7:30 am from

the Shishu Academy. The Heal-

th and Family Welfare Minis-

ter. Deputy Health Minister

and Health Secretary Syed

Ahmed will lead the walkathan.

A walkathan to mark the

tend it as special guests.

Health and Family Welfare

source said.

SAARC chairperson.

The Prime Minister's trip

Prime Minister Begum

The visit is taking place at

It will be the first visit to

#### Bank services should be unbiased: Saifur Bangladesh Bank Governor

The government has emphasised that the banking business should be conducted strictly on commercial criteria and should not cater to any particular interest under biased dictates, reports UNB. "... the banking sector

should not be used by the government, owners and managements or other interests to provide subsidies or to assist particular borrowers, groups or sectors," according to the government policy on 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.

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 rele-

vant 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 appar-See Page 8 Col 7

### Pilferage drying up Dhaka WASA The World Health Day will

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

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

Fire scare stalks Islambagh slum

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.

one person obtained a legal line and afterwards, as his family expanded and he built See Page 8 Col 1

"There are instances that

almost controlled it, he said,

but people took away the water

hoses from the fire fighters to

flared up from the smoulder-

ing tin sheets and bamboo

poles, and engulfed the whole

the fire had great difficulties in

entering the narrow lanes in

Six fire units sent during

"At one point, the fire again

soak their houses.

area," he said.

#### 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.

BCL leader killed in clash: MM College closed

From Our Correspondent JESSORE. Apr 6: A student leader of the Awami Leaguebacked Chhatra League was killed, allegedly by the activists

of Chhatra Moitre in the Gov-

ernment MM University Col-

lege here today. The college was closed till fare organisations have hung April 15 following the killing of the student.

> was a first year honours student of history.

## Compensation for workers affected by Gulf war Over 1.5 lakh more cases settled

The Governing Council or the United Nations Compen sation Commission has appr oved payment of compensation to more than 1,62,800 claimants who were forced to flee Iraq and Kuwait during the

According to a UN statement released in Dhaka yes terday, the approval came at a Rafiquzzaman's

By Court Correspondent The District and Sessions Judge, Dhaka, yesterday rejected a prayer for interim bail of Dr M Rafiguzzaman, now held in the Dhaka Central Jail. on a charge of defalcating a bank loan of about Tk 11 crore.

bail rejected

Judge Abdus Salam has called for the records of the lower court and set April 13 as the next date for the hearing of the appeal against an earlier CMM's court order rejecting the bail prayer.

A former adviser to deposed president H M Ershad, Rafiquzzaman was arrested on - persons forced to flee See Page 8 Col 4

By Staff Correspondent 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 state-Official sources in Dhaka last night confirmed that the

awardee claimants included Bangladeshis also, who returned home from Kuwait and lraq 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

(category A), persons died or

injured (category B) and individual losses of property (category C) - all victims of the Gulf War. The commission, which op-

erates as a subsidiary of the UN Security Council, began the work of resolving claims in December 1993.

#### Former NBL MD arrested By Staff Correspondent

Police yesterday arrested former Managing Director (MD) of the National Bank Limited. Mohammad Rustam Ali, on a charge of misappropriating money from the bank. Earlier, on March 31, the

Bureau of Anti-Corruption had filed a case against him with Motifheel thana for embezzling Tk 3.50,000 through Debit Vouchers. He was MD of the privately-owned bank from 1987 to 1993. Rustam Ali's services were

Corruption.

left destitute by every fire. The residents of Maurar terminated after a Bangladesh Tek slum which is very close Bank report on corruption to the Islambagh slum also against him, said a press remaintain all-night vigil to lease of the Bureau of Antiguard against possible arson.

#### By Staff Correspondent

"The quick recurrence of A fire scare stalks the slum in Islambagh area of the city fires has created panic in the area," said Mohammad Serajul where residents have organised night vigil against acci-Islam of Maurar Tek. A plastic factory worker, Serajul Islam also said that rumours have People living in shanties on bamboo stilts along the bank of also gripped the locality.

> 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

"On Tuesday, there was a

rumour that our slums will be

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

one mobile team.

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 shantfes, said Sheikh Bacchu, one of the fire The fire brigade came and

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 havebegun to rebuild their houses with bits and pieces collected from the spoils of Monday's in-

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 wei-

banners seeking assistance for the fire victims. One of the banners said "We do not want relief, we want a wide road."

Asaduzzaman Rinku, 20,

# Mummy, Can I Go