

MARBLE MARBLE MARBLE
 WE HAVE HUGE READY STOCK OF
 ITALIAN CARRARA, PERLATO SICILIA,
 BOTTICINO INDIAN KESSWARI GREEN,
 MALAYSIAN AND PAKISTANI MARBLE
 OF DIFFERENT TYPES
NIRMAN INTERNATIONAL LTD.
 199, TEJGAON 1/A, DHAKA
 TEL: 805957, 807363 SHOW ROOM 861985

Cash 24hr
 Standard Chartered

Inside Today

Article
Aid Consortium : Old Questions and Cold Answers
 Column: Beneath the Surface by Abdul Bayes Page 4

International
 US officials, lawmakers for repeal of Pressler Amendment
 Israel to build new houses in West Bank Page 5

Business
 Weekly review: DSE loses Tk 119cr in market capitalisation
 Mahathir slates West for opposing EAEC scheme Pages 6, 7

Conversation
 Conversation with Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali Page 8

Metropolitan
 Dhaka Day by Day

And then there were none Page 3

Dhaka, Kathmandu stress at official talks SAARC should be strengthened to solve common problems

From Staff Correspondent

KATHMANDU, Apr 7: Bangladesh and Nepal today underscored the need for strengthening SAARC and hoped that the member states would continue to work in the true spirit of the organisation to solve their common problems.

At the official talks here today the two countries also showed keen interest to make the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) operational soon for tangible benefit of the millions of people in the region.

Both sides believed that SAPTA would enable trade liberalisation in South Asia.

At the formal talks the Bangladesh side was led by the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and included Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, A N M Eusuf, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Farooq Sobhan, Foreign Secretary, Mozammel Haq, Press Secretary to the Prime Minister, Dr Ashfaqur Rahman, Director General of SAARC.

The Nepalese side led by Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari included Deputy Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, State Minister for Commerce Bhim Bahadur Rawal, Chief Secretary Dr Ishwar Prasad Upadhyay and Nepal's ambassador to Bangladesh.

With the gradual strengthening of SAARC, it was felt during the talks that the SAARC Secretariat would be expanded.

Both sides observed that SAARC would be able to open up newer areas of cooperation and felt that the SAARC should concentrate its linkages with the European Union and other regional forums like ASEAN.

They reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and agreed to further consolidate and deepen the existing friendly ties.

The Nepalese Prime Minister referred to the recent single country fair of Bangladesh held in Kathmandu and said Dhaka has been able to display



SAARC Chairperson and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia being received by Prime Minister of Nepal Man Mohan Adhikari (2nd left) on her arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu yesterday. — PID photo

15 killed, 50 hurt in Ctg road accident

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 7: At least 15 persons were killed and around 50 injured in a road accident this morning at Fakirhat under Sitakunda thana, 20 miles off the city.

Police and hospital sources said 13 persons died on the spot when an overloaded passenger bus bound for Sonapur from Chittagong collided head-on with an empty truck coming to Chittagong. The driver of the bus was killed on the spot while the truck driver fled, police said.

Both the vehicles were badly damaged.

Two fatally injured passengers Moinul Karim (22), who was general secretary of BCL, MES College unit, succumbed to his injuries at a private clinic here and Sidu Meah (50) at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH), raising the death toll to 15.

The others killed in the accident were identified as Ruhul Amin (30), Md. Siraj (30), Wajjullah (40), Samarendra Nath (45), Habib Ullah (35), Sirajul Islam (40), Khairullah (35), Bazul Hoque (30), Mostafa Sardar (35), Abdul Mannan (50) and Mujibul Hoque (35). Two others were yet to be identified.

Of the injured, 15 were admitted to the CMCH and the rest were admitted to Sitakunda health complex and private clinics in the city.

Khaleda lauds Kathmandu's role in region

From Staff Correspondent

KATHMANDU, Apr 7: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia tonight stressed the need for a regional approach for the optimal and multiple uses of the regional water resources, reports BSS.

"We have to evolve a regional strategy for utilisation of our water resources. This will prove beneficial to all people of this region," said Begum Zia while speaking at a banquet given in her honour by Nepalese Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari at the state hall of his office Singha Durbar.

Lauding the Nepalese government's sincere efforts to forge greater regional cooperation with the neighbouring countries, Begum Zia said Bangladesh would like to work together with Nepal for exploitation of the regional water resources through multiple

Labour organisations fear Opposition hartal may affect SKOP shutdown

By Nazmul Ashraf

The agitating labour organisations fear that the major opposition parties' April 9-10 hartal would harm their 48-hour shutdown programme scheduled for April 11-12, insiders said.

The Opposition's hartal may affect the success of the trade unions' work stoppage planned to be enforced by workers and employees of different sectors, the insiders said. Explaining this, they said that they apprehended antagonism to their shutdown programme since it will prolong a disruption in public life by two more consecutive days.

The Sramik Karmachari Otkya Parishad (SKOP), an umbrella body of 18 labour organisations in different sectors, and the alliance of five trade unions in the jute-textile sectors, had earlier separately

Rao asks Joshi to deal cautiously with migrant issue

NEW DELHI, Apr 7: Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao today advised Maharashtra Chief Minister Manohar Joshi, to proceed cautiously while dealing with the issue of illegal migrants in the state, reports PTI.

While proceeding cautiously on the issue, the state administration should ensure that no particular individual should feel apprehensive of the measure, the Prime Minister advised Joshi when the latter called on him, official sources here said.

The approach on the issue should be fair and transparent considering the cosmopolitan nature of Bombay which is also the commercial capital of the country, the Prime Minister told the chief

Fertiliser crisis MP, 5 others chargesheeted in Jhalakati

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Apr 7: Jhalakati police yesterday submitted chargesheet against six persons including a ruling party MP, in connection with hoarding and black marketing urea fertiliser.

Gazi Aziz Ferdous MP of the BNP and five others were charged under Section 25 of the Special Powers Act, also with creating artificial crisis in the market during acute fertiliser crisis in the country.

Earlier, police seized in all 3455 bags of urea from a push cart, a trawler and the godown of Gazi Enterprise owned by the MP on March 24.

Police later sealed the godown. No arrest has yet been made.

Nepalese DPM tells The Daily Star Kathmandu for sharing of regional water resources

From M Anwarul Haq

KATHMANDU, Apr 7: Nepalese Deputy Prime Minister said today that Kathmandu believes in mutual sharing of region's water resources for overall benefit of the countries concerned.

Nepal holds 70 per cent of water in the region in the lean season and this can be used through mutual cooperation, he said in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star.

Madhav Kumar Nepal, who is very influential in the Cabinet of Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari, also holds the important position of Minister for Defence and Foreign Affairs.

"There is need for mutual understanding and cooperation among the three SAARC countries — India, Bangladesh and Nepal — to utilise the vast water resources of the Ganges basin," he said.

"Nepal and Bangladesh are moderate but as for those in the other countries, there needs a better understanding,"

Visit adds another landmark in ties: Adhikari

From Staff Correspondent

KATHMANDU, Apr 7: The Prime Minister of Nepal, Man Mohan Adhikari, tonight expressed the hope that the visit of Begum Khaleda Zia here would further strengthen the commitments of the two countries towards SAARC as well as enhance the existing friendly relations, reports BSS.

Speaking at a banquet hosted by him in honour of Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at state hall of Singha Durbar Adhikari said the visit of Begum Zia would add another landmark to the friendship and cooperation existing between the two countries.

He said SAPTA was an important instrument which directly addresses the need to make SAARC programme-oriented in a coordinated manner.

He expressed the hope that the leaders of SAARC countries would be able to launch a more concrete programme in the forthcoming SAARC summit to be held in New Delhi.

The New Delhi summit, Adhikari said, would provide an opportunity to better set the seven-nation regional forum to keep in track in a

Tongi paura model polls Monday

By Krishna P Roy

The Election Commission (EC) is going to hold model elections in Tongi Paurashabha on Monday despite some minor irregularities in preparation of the identity (ID) cards and allegations of violation of the code of conduct.

The EC had successfully held such model polls in Dapunia union in Mymensingh district on April 30 last year.

Four candidates, three of them supported separately by BNP, Awami League and Jaiya Party, are vying for the post of chairman of Tongi Paurashabha while 87 candidates are in the race for 21 posts of commissioner of seven wards.

According to official sources ID cards were distributed among 65,000 voters, while the number of registered voters is over 72,000.

Besides, allegations are there that ID cards were not yet handed over to all 65,000 voters and in some cases photograph of a person is printed on some one else's ID card.

Mohammad Shahjahan of Tongibharan under Ward-3 alleged that photograph of an unknown person was printed on his card. He also showed his card to this correspondent.

During a visit yesterday, this correspondent found some people filing their complaints with the temporary office of the EC in Tongi that they were yet to get their ID cards.

The office of the District Election Commission of Gazipur has been temporarily shifted to Tongi to conduct

What's in a name?

WASHINGTON, Apr 7: It's not easy to confuse the leaders of Pakistan and India. But senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms did just that, reports Reuter.

Emerging from an hour-long closed-door meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Helms took to

Exchange of views with editors Govt has failed in every sphere, says Hasina

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday exchanged views with the editors of newspapers and news agencies and intellectuals on the country's overall situation, reports UNB.

Ahmedul Kabir, Anwar Hossain Manju, Mahfuz Anam, Kazi Shahed Ahmad, Mizanur Rahman Mizan, Alamgir Mahjudin, Moazzem Hossain, Alhaj Makbul Hossain, A S M Bahuddin, Mir Nurul Islam and Golam Tahabur were, among others, present in the meeting at Hasina's Dhanmondi residence.

Among intellectuals Shamsur Rahman, Syed Shamsul Huq, Rafiq Azad, M R Akhter Mukul, Mohadeb Shaha, Ali Akasad, Dr Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman, Dr SA Malek, Panna Kaiser, Syed Hasan Imam, Shirin Akhter and Lutfur Rahman Liton were present.

Expressing concern over the situation prevailing in political and socio-economic fronts, Hasina said "We are waging the current agitation to save the country from crisis."

She said the people hoped that Prime Minister Begum Zia would run the country democratically and take pragmatic steps to resolve the problems of the common man.

She expressed the government for first three years since this parliament was formed, the opposition leader said adding "but the government totally failed in every sphere due to its inefficiency and partisan outlook."

"While in parliament, we raised various people-oriented proposals but those were not accepted by the ruling party," she told the meeting.

A committee was formed to eliminate violence from campuses but that committee could not work, Hasina said the administration has virtually



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina seeking votes for party candidates in Tongi Paurashabha elections. — Star photo

Clarification

Following is the summary of the letter issued by the law office of Moudud Ahmed and Associates, on behalf of their client Dr M Rafiqzaman, after the report headlined 'Defaulting loanee Dr Rafiqzaman now in the city' was published in The Daily Star on April 2:

Written on April 3, the letter contended that the headline of the report was not correct as "... BSB has not granted any loan to our client." The law office described him as an internationally renowned computer scientist based in the United States. Referring to Rafiq Systems Ltd., of which Rafiqzaman is the chairman and against which the Tk 10.85 crore bank loan was granted, the letter noted that it was set up as a public limited company with BSB subscribing 75 per cent of the shares and sanctioned a loan. It added that Rafiqzaman also invested around one million US dollars in the project to produce high-tech intra-ocular lens and not 'contact lens.' Claiming that the company has