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# The Daily Star

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VOL. V NO. 83 REGD. NO. DA 781 CHAITRA 29, 1401 BS, DHAKA WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 1995 ZILQAD 11, 1415 HIJRI 12 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 5.00

**Inside Today**  
**Article**

**Turkey Invades Iraq to Hunt Down Kurdish Rebels**  
 Column: Spotlight on Middle East by Muehuddin Ahmad Page 4

**International**

**UN blames Serbs for targeting civilian areas in Sarajevo**  
 Winnie challenges her dismissal in court Page 5

**Business**

**Iraq holds talks with US oil cos to help end UN sanctions**  
 US still favours China's entry into WTO Page 6

**Supplement**

Special supplement on the visit of Kuwaiti Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Pages 7-10

**Metropolitan**

**Dhaka Day by Day**  
 Learning to Live with Capricious Electricity Page 3

**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Hasina visits tornado victims**  
 Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday went to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital to see the condition of the people injured in Saturday's tornado that lashed three thousand of Munshiganj district. She spent some time with them. Meanwhile, Awami League workers yesterday distributed relief materials and medicine in 10 villages of Lauhajang and Sirajdikhan thanas, severely affected by the devastating tornado, reports UNB.

**Lightning kills two in Pabna**  
 PABNA, Apr 11: Two people were killed by lightning on the river Padma at Bhagronpur in Sadar thana today. Witnesses said Ratan Halder, 35, and Sunil Halder, 30, died on the spot after a lightning had struck them when they were fishing in the river at about 6 pm, reports UNB.

**50 injured in Sirajganj clash**  
 SIRAJGANJ, Apr 11: Fifty people were injured, eight of them seriously, in a clash between two rival groups of people in Belkuchi thana today. Police said the clash erupted when a group of people led by Sultan Mahmud, former chairman of the Dhukuria union parishad, attacked the supporters of the present chairman Golam Mostafa reports UNB.

**Hajj camp opens**  
 The temporary Hajj camp for the current year which has been set up at a commercial complex built by Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkya (RAJUNK) at Uttara (Sector 6) becomes operational, reports BSS.

## India refuses to modify its defence pact with Nepal

NEW DELHI, Apr 11: India has refused to modify a treaty that forces Nepal to win New Delhi's approval of its defence policy and arms deals, Nepal's prime minister indicated today, reports AP.

But Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari said negotiations on changing a 1950 treaty that governs relations between the two countries would continue.

"India's response has been positive and may be we will reach some decisions," Adhikari told reporters after talks with Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

"In international dealings, we shouldn't expect that hundred per cent will be achieved in one go," Adhikari, Nepal's Marxist leader, who won power last year, said.

Reuters says, Adhikari today demanded the right to import arms from China pressing India to change a treaty with Kathmandu that effectively opposes such a deal.

"It is the right of every country to import arms which are cheaper," Adhikari said.

There was no immediate comment on the talks from Indian officials.

The Communists have been critical of the treaty saying it gives India powers to determine security concerns of the tiny landlocked Himalayan nation of 20 million people.

They argue that the treaty was signed when Nepal had a weak king who allowed India to impose its fear of a Chinese invasion on Nepal the year Beijing ordered troops to march into Tibet.

Adhikari said he would seek closer cross-border ties with Tibet during his talks with Chinese leaders in Beijing during a five-day visit from April 17. He goes to Mongolia on April 21.

"We want to integrate our economy closer with Tibet," he said. "That's an outstanding issue and we will raise it with the Chinese leadership."

Nepal wants changes in the clauses that force it to abide by India's security interests. So, any military dealings between Nepal and a third country need India's approval.

In 1988, New Delhi was upset when Nepal ordered weapons from China, its northern neighbour across the Himalayas. Kathmandu never told delivery of the arms after India reacted.

"India appreciates our right to import arms," said Adhikari, whose party has always criticised previous liberal governments in Nepal of being biased towards India.

But despite his party's unhappiness, Adhikari said he

## Storm lashes Khulna: One dead, 50 hurt

From Our Correspondent  
 KHULNA, Apr 11: A severe storm hit the Khulna metropolitan area this evening. With a speed of 125 kilometres an hour, the storm battered the city and its suburbs for nearly half an hour from 7.05 to 7.35.

According to initial reports, Eskander Ali, 55, a jute mills worker, was killed when the tin roof of his house collapsed. Another 50 people were injured. Two hundred thatched houses were damaged and 63 electric poles uprooted.

## Shantibahini agrees to extend ceasefire

From Staff Correspondent  
 CHITTAGONG, Apr 11: Leaders of the Shantibahini have agreed to extend the ceasefire in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) May 5 in a bid to continue the peace talks with the government.

According to highly placed sources, the Shantibahini leaders sent their consent for extension of the truce through the convenor of liaison committee Hangshadoz Chakma on Monday. Their consent came in response to a proposal for extending the ceasefire by the government through Hangshadoz Chakma.

The ongoing ceasefire is due to expire on April 20. However, in reply the Shantibahini leaders also place two preconditions for holding next round of peace talks.

In its letter the Shantibahini demanded the release of 15 of their members who were arrested during the ceasefire by April 16.

## LDF announces fresh programmes

By Staff Correspondent  
 The Left Democratic Front (LDF) yesterday announced fresh programmes of agitation which includes march towards the Jatiya Sangsad on April 25 demanding dissolution of "illegal" parliament and holding of early general elections.

In a rally at the Bangabandhu Avenue in the city, the LDF leaders said that the local units of the front will gherao the offices of Deputy Commissioners (DCs) and Thana Nirbahi Officers (TNOs) on the day.

The front will stage sit-in in front of the Election Commission and submit a memorandum to the Chief Election Commissioner on April 30 in pursuance of its demands.

It will also observe 'Peasant Solidarity Day' on April 15 and countrywide demonstration day on May 3.

## Kuwaiti Prime Minister arrives today

By Staff Correspondent  
 The Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Saad Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah arrives today at the head of a high-powered delegation on a four-day official visit to Bangladesh.

This is the first visit by a top Kuwaiti leader since 1980 when the Ameer, Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al Sabah paid a state visit to Bangladesh.

The Crown Prince will be received at the Zia International Airport by Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman when he arrives at 10:20 this morning from Bangkok after visiting China and Thailand.

Sheikh Saad and his 80-member entourage will be staying at the Sonargang Hotel.

Sheikh Saad's entourage will include the ministers for Cabinet Affairs, Oil, Commerce and Industry, the Adviser to the Governor of Ahmadi Province, Under Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Director-General of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and other high officials. A large number of representatives of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry and media and information officials will also accompany their Prime Minister.



Kuwaiti Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah

## Manpower export to Qatar declines

By Reaz Ahmad  
 The Country's manpower export to Qatar has dropped significantly during the recent years.

To improve the situation the government has taken steps to send more skilled and semi-skilled workers to the Gulf state where some 70,000 Bangladeshis are now working.

After the deportation of some 27,000 Bangladeshis from Saudi Arabia recently the government is now exploring job opportunities for the growing number of unemployed people.

The yearly break-up of the number of workers sent to Qatar and their remittances are: 1990 - 7672 persons - \$ US 45.70 million; 1991 - 3772, \$ 55.30m; 1992 - 3252 - \$ 48.06 m; 1993 - 2441 - \$ 55.33m and 1994 - 624 - \$ 55.03m.

Despite the drop in manpower export to Qatar, this Gulf state stands sixth as Bangladesh's source of foreign exchange earnings.

The Bangladeshis working in Qatar sent Taka 210.78 crore and Taka 224.60 crore in fiscal 1992-93 and 1993-94 respectively. Saudi Arabia topped the list from where the Bangladeshis sent Taka 1560.34 crore as remittances in 1992-93, followed by

## PM tells public meet in Tangail

Without naming the Awami League, the Prime Minister said the Opposition's intention from the beginning was to create problems for the BNP government.

She mentioned that they had declared not to allow the BNP to run the country peacefully for a single day.

"They have banded with autocratic forces to oust the democratic government. They are out to jeopardise the democratic process."

Indicating at their collaboration with the Jamaat-e-Islami, the Prime Minister said

## SKOP observes first day's strike

By Staff Correspondent  
 The first day of a 48-hour country wide strike by industrial workers passed off yesterday without any untoward incident being reported from anywhere.

The strike coincided with a dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the Left Democratic Front (LDF).

The Sramik-Karmachari Oikhya Parishad (SKOP), which combines 18 labour organisations, called the strike in the industrial units and enforced a road, rail and waterways barricade to press for its 8-point demand, including implement-



Workers of the Adamjee Jute Mills held a rally yesterday. — Star photo

## Manzur murder: Hearing of case begins Apr 17

From Staff Correspondent  
 CHITTAGONG, April 11: The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) here today set April 17 for hearing the case of Maj Gen Abdul Manzur's alleged murder in 1981.

CMM Matur Rahman announced the fresh date in the absence of the three retired army officers arrested in connection with the case, who were scheduled to be produced before the court today.

Maj Gen Abdul Latif, Lt Col Shamsur Rahman and Maj Kazi Emdadul Haq, detained in three separate jails, could not be produced before the court because of the countrywide strike enforced by the Sramik

## Chavan's house looted

NEW DELHI, Apr 11: Burglars tied up a servant of India's top government minister and looted his house while eight armed guards slept, a news agency reported today, reports AP.

Details of the burglary at the home of Interior Minister SB Chavan were not immediately available, but United News of India (UNI) quoted unnamed police officials as saying no one has been arrested so far.

The armed robbers broke into the house Monday night, UNI said. The house is in Nanded, a town in central India. The minister and his family live in the capital, New Delhi.

## Age-old recruitment policy blamed for nurses' agitation

By Morshed Ali Khan  
 The grievances of the 18,000 diploma and student nurses across the country, who have just called off their indefinite strike, remain with their leaders unsure if their agitation would bear any fruit.

The nurses' leaders warned that they will go for a fresh action programme if the government fails to keep its 'commitments' which brought them back to work.

Leaders of the Bangladesh Diploma Nurses Association (BDNA) and the Bangladesh Diploma Student Nurses Union (BDSNU), talking to The Daily Star, said they are waiting for the government to fulfil the 'promises' made in the agreement signed on April 6 this month.

The nurses resumed work on April 7 after 20 days of non-stop strike following a written assurance from a top level government negotiating team comprising two ministers.

According to sources concerned, the root of the present problem dates back to the early forties. Faced with an acute shortage of literate female workers, the authorities had then recruited 'anyone' willing to work as a nurse.

With a six-month training, the new recruits enjoyed the status of assistant nurses staff.

It is alleged that the government until recently, kept recruiting the assistant nurses under the old provision.

One source said that about 4,500 diploma nurses in the country are now unemployed.

## Gas fire kills housewife, injures 14 in city

By DMCH Correspondent  
 A housewife was killed and 14 others including three children were injured in an explosion that originated from a gas stove at a house in Rampura in the city yesterday.

Afia Khatoun, 45, died of serious burns soon after being admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. All the injured were hospitalised, two of them with first degree burns.

According to sources, the explosion occurred early in the morning, at around five am at the ground floor of the two-storied building when Afia

## 2 killed in Ctg road mishap

From Staff Correspondent  
 CHITTAGONG, Apr 11: Two passengers were killed on the spot and 20 others injured when a bus skidded off the road near Aman Bazar, 8 miles from here this afternoon, police and hospital sources said.

One of the deceased was identified as Moulana Ansar Uddin, 45.

Police said, the Chittagong bound bus from Hathazari, met with the accident when the driver lost control of the vehicle.

The injured were admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital and private clinics.

Police seized the bus but the driver fled.



A procession by nurses in the city during their recent agitation. — Star file photo

## Minister's directive Inform Food Ministry about IRRI-Boro situation

Agriculture Minister Majid-ul-Haq, at an inter-ministerial meeting in the city yesterday, asked the Department of Agriculture to provide information to the Food Ministry about the exact situation of IRRI-Boro plantation and expected crop production, reports UNB.

The meeting reviewed the impact of drought on last season's Aman crop, and on the plantation of IRRI-Boro in the current season, said an official here.

The meeting was informed that all the irrigation pumps operated uninterrupted during the current IRRI-Boro season thanks to regular supply of electricity and diesel.

Majid-ul-Haq, who presided over the meeting, asked the agriculture officials to adopt

## Forex retention quota for exporters enhanced

The government has enhanced the foreign exchange retention quota for exporters from the existing 15 per cent to 20 per cent of freight on board (FOB) export value, a Bangladesh Bank press release said here yesterday, reports BSS.

It said the retention quota for exporters of goods with relatively high import content will, however, remain unchanged at five per cent of FOB export value.

The decision was taken to facilitate the exporters to further access to foreign exchange for their business and to broaden and deepen the local interbank foreign exchange market.

## Body to probe causes of fertiliser crisis

By Staff Correspondent  
 The government has formed a one-man judicial committee to investigate the causes of the fertiliser crisis in the country, ruling party sources said yesterday.

The committee, headed by a High Court judge, Justice B I Chowdhury, will submit its report within a month. The government decision regarding the formation of the committee is likely to be announced today through an official notification, the source added.

The 14-member standing committee of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), at an emergency meeting last week, had unanimously observed that the fertiliser crisis deserved a judicial probe.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia also discussed the matter with some of her close aides on Monday.

## Ghorashal Urea Factory resumes production

Ghorashal Urea Fertiliser Factory, an enterprise of the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), has resumed its production from 6 pm Monday, reports UNB.

Some 383 metric tons of urea was produced on April 10, according to a press release issued here yesterday by the BCIC.

The urea production in the factory was suspended following a damage to the godown during the storm on April 9. However, emergency measures were taken to protect the urea stored in the bulk godown, it added.

## Arms recovered, 3 held in city

By Staff Correspondent  
 Police arrested three youths and recovered arms and huge ammunitions from their possessions in Tejgani Para in the city yesterday.

Sources said that the Tejgaon police cordoned off the area where two rival groups traded gunfire around 12 am.

The groups locked in clash over an illegal business of drugs and domination in the area, police sources said.

The arrested youths were identified as Hashem Ali, 20, Dulal, 20 and Shbbu, 18.