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BNP decides to offer direct Khaleda-Hasina talks soon

JAISHTHA 1, 1402 BS,

By Staff Correspondent

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will soon formally send a proposal to the Opposition suggesting a meeting between the Prime Minister and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina with a view to ending the present political impasse, party sources said yesterday.

This was decided vesterday in a meeting of the BNP policy-makers with party chairperson Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair. Senior cabinet members were present at the unscheduled meeting at the PM's Cantonment residence.

Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar would formally convey the offer to his AL. counterpart. the sources said

without elaborating.

Talukdar, who was not availabe vesterday, had told The Daily Star on Saturday that he would phone Zillur Rahman, the AL general secretary, Sunday, But Zillur Rahman said he had not received any call from Talukdar vesterday.

One BNP source who attended the meeting said that his party would seriously try to bring the major oppositon parties to the negotiating

ter of summoning Parliament for the budget session was also discussed in the meeting. The decision to offer direct Khaleda-Hasina talks follow

Opposition's proposal for se-

lecting a CEC on the basis of

consensus because it wanted to

by the AL central working

committee on May 8 also criti-

cised the government for the

'unilateral appointment' of the

CEC. "Such motivated ap-

pointment will obstruct the

holding of free and fair vot-

the government's recent deci-

sions regarding the Election

Commission by laying sieges to

the district and thana levels on

the new CEC, the AL is also

opposing the appointment of

some of the people with re-

gard to the preparation of new

voter lists. The AL fears that

the BNP will try to take advan-

tage by engaging its own men

force the Jauva Party too, has

similarly denounced the ap-

pointment and plans to gheroo

See Page 12 Col 7

The other major opposition

Besides the appointment of

HICEC's office in Dakacand

The AL also plans to protest

ing," the resolution said.

Later, a resolution adopted

rig the elections.

He also said that the mat-

Minister for such a dialogue. For the past several months Begum Zia has repeated her offer for talks with the Opposition at different public meetings and particularly, at the party's divisional conferences held late last month. Begum Zia has said that she

was still ready to step down along with her cabinet 30 days ahead of the next general elections. The opposition parties which at one stage had ex-

pressed their readiness to participate in elections under an interim administration with the President at its head, have since changed their strategy and been insisting on a firm commitment from the ruling See Page 12 Col 3

Imran's fiancee

converts to

High salinity forces closure of Khulna **Newsprint Mills**

From Our Correspondent KHULNA, May 14: The Khulna Newsprint Mills (KNM) has been closed for an indefinite period today because of a lack of sweet water for its boilers.

According to a KNM source, all three boilers of the factory have developed mechanical faults because of increased salinity in the river water used.

The source said that efforts to keep the boilers running by using sweet water mixed with saline water have failed because most of the 1600 tubes of the three botlers had been either totally or partially blocked. He said the tubes cannot stand saline water.

The authorities, who often fetch sweet water from downstream by using barges, have found it increasingly difficult See Page 12 Col 7

Fertiliser distribution

Restrictions on private sector withdrawn

By Sharier Khan

Restrictions on the distribution of fertilizer in private sector have been withdrawn. official sources said.

The decision, given immediate effect, puts an end to a four-month embargo and also to the current distribution system run by the district administration officials. The temporary distribution system was introduced in January in the face of a severe fertilizer crisis

The restrictions were withdrawn at a meeting headed by the Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam Tuesday. The meeting was also attended by the State Minister for Industries Lutfur Rahman Khan. secretaries of the ministries of Home, Agriculture and Industries and representatives from the Bangladesh Fertilizer Association which represents over 650 private dealers of the country.

It was decided at the meeting that a detailed distribution policy should be formulated in the near future.

The Home Secretary assured the private dealers of unhindered transportation of fertilizer and said that the police across the country have already been informed of the decision.

Meanwhile, the authorities have asked the private dealers to receive the delivery orders pending at the fertilizer facto-

See Page 12 Col 4

repeated calls by the Prime News Analysis

BNP passes up yet another fine opportunity

By Chapal Bashar

Chances of a possible understanding between the ruling BNP and the Opposition to evolve a modus operandi for allowing smooth holding of the next general elections may have been pushed further back by the controversy over the appointment of a new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)

last month. The issue of Justice A K M Sadeque's appointment appears to have deepened the political crisis created 14 mo-11ths ago over the Opposition's demand for elections under a non-partisan caretaker govern

The Opposition bitterly criticised the appointment of dustice Sadeque since, according to them, it was done by the the voter registration offices at BNP government unilaterally without any consultation with the major political parties. The Opposition wanted a new CEC acceptable to all and had even suggested that the government discuss the matter with the parties having representation in Parliament

Soon after the announcement of Justice Sadeque's name on April 27, the main opposition Awami League rejected it outright. Party chief Sheikh Hasina at a public meeting in Chittagong the

Islam LONDON, May 14: Jemima Goldsmith. 21. daughter of in-

dustrialist Sir James Goldsmith, has converted to Islam, her future husband, cricket same day said: "We will not ac star and international playboy Imran Khan announced on cept this appointment." Hasina alleged that the BNP Saturday, reports AFP. government had ignored the

"Both our families approve and are extremely happy about the match", the former Pakistan cricket captain said in a statement to the British

The marriage which will take place at the end of June had been announced on Friday evening by the Director of Taskforce Communications media relations consultant to Sir James.

The spokesman had been unable to say anything about the previously unpublicised relationship between the 42year-old ex-cricketer known for years as an international playboy and the young British

The statement said simply Sir James and Lady Annabel are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter to Imran Khan. The marriage will take place at the end of June." The spokesman was unable

would be held or give any further details. The family is not prepared

to say where the wedding

to add to this statement in any way, he said.

linran retired from the See Page 12 Col

Int'l Day of Families today

The International Day of Families will be observed today (Monday) in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the world, reports UNB.

The theme of the day -"Tolerance Begins in the Family" - focusing the role of family in promoting social harmony, reflects the UN General Assembly's designation of 1995 as the United Nations Year of Tolerance.

In a message on the occasion. UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said, "the International Day of Families recognises the most fundamental unit of society." "It is within the families

that the character of society is shaped generation after generation," Boutros-Ghali said in the message

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in a message on the eve of the day called for maintaining our traditional family structure in the face of disintegration of families under the strains of mechanised civilisation.

"We must keep intact our traditional family structure for social welfare and development," the Prime Minister

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina in a message greeted members of all the families of the country and expressed solidarity with them in order to See Page 12 Col 8



Impoverished village people, separated from their homes and families, keep flocking to the capital daily in search of a livelihood. A poignant reminder of an abject reality today, - Star photo the International Day of Families.

8 more killed in Kashmir as protests continue

for the task.

OIC condemns killings, Benazir orders emergency cabinet meet

SRINAGAR, May 14: Indian roops hunted for holed-up guerillas today in the town of Charar e Sharif as Kashmiri Muslim leaders urged the Islamic world to snap ties with India for the burning of a shrine, report AFP, AP.

The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) today expressed concern over the violence and accused India of "large scale killings" in Charare-Sharif

In Islamabad, Pak Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto ordered an emergency cabinet meeting today to discuss India's threat to annex Pakistancontrolled Kashmir

Ministers will consider the destruction of the Muslim shrine at Charar-e-Sharif in Indian Kashmir "as a result of military action by Indian forces." an official statement said

Meanwhile Islamic militants stormed a village in Kashmir early this morning and killed eight people, including a sixyear-old boy, as protests continued across the valley. Gunmen broke into a farm

house in Bharat village of Doda district, about 250 kilometers south of Srinagar and sprayed bullets on the sleeping family members, police said. Although no group has

claimed responsibility for the killing, police suspect the attackers belonged either to the Hizbul Mujahedeen or the Harkat al-Ansar, the two militias know to be operating in

Nearly 35 rebels belonging to the two groups were killed

in gun battles with Indian soldiers in Charar-e-Sharif, where and ancient shrine of Kashmir's patron saint, Nooruddin Wali, was burnt to the ground during fighting on Thursday.

The government has blamed the separatist rebels, who want an independent Kashmir. for the fire, but Islamic leaders and many common people believe the fire was caused by Indian troops.

Police fired bullets and tear gas at more than a dozen places today to stop protesters who defied curfew and shooton-sight orders.

Most of Kashmir valley was placed under curlew after the fighting began in Charar-e-

Soldiers continued search-See Page 12 Col 4

- AFP/UNB photo

Plot to kill Chandrika

COLOMBO. May 14: Sri Lankan police revealed that the commando hit squads of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had targeted for assassination of President Chandrika Kumaratunga, reports Xinhua.

According to police sources, police captured eight LTTE members in Colombo in recent days who disclosed the plan to kill the president and the opposition leader and 18 top government and opposition politicians.

The LTTE's target also included former presidents DB Wijetunge and JR Jayewar dene, opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe, Deputy Defence Minister Anurudha Ratwatte and Foreign Minister Lakshaman Kadirgamar. The LTTE hit squads also

plan to attack the Colombo Port, the international airport, See Page 12 Col 1

AL to keep all pledges if voted to power: Hasina

BARGUNA May 14: Awami League president Sheikh Hasina today said if voted to power, her party would keep all its pledges to the people, reports UNB.

"The Awami League was not in power, vet it forced the government to concede to many of its demands in fulfilment of the pledges made before the 1991 parliamentary elections," she told a huge public meeting at the local Zila School ground.

Hasina said her party had forced the ruling party to waive land tax on up to 25 bighas and agricultural loan up to Tk 5,000 and to switchover to a parliamentary system of government.

She accused the ruling BNP and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of betraying the people by not honouring its pre-election pledges. "It (BNP) did not even fulfil the joint declaration of the three mainstream alliances formed during the anti-Ershad movement."

The Awami League chief also charged the BNP with killing 18 farmers and ruining the country's economy. "So, it has no right to stay in power any longer.

Emphasising the strengthening of local government, Hasina said if the Awami League is voted to power, people's representatives will run all affairs of the state...

She called the BNP corrupt and accused it of destroving the hard-earned democracy by politicising the administration.

Referring to the resignation of the Opposition MPs, the Awami League chief said the ruling BNP had forced them to

quit the House. See Page 12 Col 2

WHO faces crisis of confidence

GENEVA, May 14: Behind the imposing facade of the World Health Organization's multimillion-dollar headquar ters in Geneva, worried bureaucrats are being forced to undergo some hard soulsearching, reports AP.

The annual 190-nation World Health Assembly, intended as a yearly check-up on the organization's state of health, opened up a Pandora's box of allegations of racism and mismanagement.

The problems come at a time when the agency is trying to cope with worsening health conditions in the world's poorest nations while facing a growing reluctance from donors just to keep up current funding levels.

WHO is going through an internal catharsis. Anthony Piel, a top WHO manager, acknowledged.

Rifts became apparent from the very start of the two-week assembly, which ended Friday.

African nations, who helped Director General Hiroshi Nakajima of Japan win reappointment in 1992 over the opposition of the United States and Europe, accused him of racism and tried to oust him from his post

They alleged Nakajima had told a meeting in January that it was difficult to appoint Africans to top positions within the WHO because of poor writing and presentation skills and difficulties adapting to Western culture.

A few days later the agency's longtime external auditor, Sir John Bourn, said he would quit because of "lack of co-operation and trust" from WHO bosses. A replacement has already been chosen.

Several member nations complained that WHO had lost respect. Others said the agency was dragging its feet over implementing administrative reforms. Sweden has

cut some of its funding to

protest the fact that one third of the reforms set out two vears ago still have not been adopted

None of this helps the reputation of the WHO," said US delegate Neil Boyer, director for health programmes at the State Department. "It, is not served well by having internal laundering aired in pub-

The United States funds about a quarter of the WHO's budget, which is around 840 million dollar every two years.

Piel admitted that in the past staff had been appointed to senior positions more for political than for professional reasons. This had led to resentment from WHO staff who feel blocked from higher posts, he said.

He acknowledged Africans and women were seriously underrepresented at senior levels but that the agency was trying to correct the imbal-See Page 12 Col 8

6 die, 8 hurt in road accidents

At least six people were killed and eight others injured in separate road accidents in Magura and Sirajgani vesterday, reports UNB.

. A truck rammed and smashed an auto-rickshaw on the Magura-Kamarkhali road vesterday, killing four people and injuring three.

Two of the dead were identified as Abdus Salam, 35, and Bakkar, 50, a guard of the Sonali Bank's Magura branch. The auto-rickshaw's driver was one of the two other unidentified victims.

Police and witnesses said the loaded truck, coming from Dhaka, rammed the Kamarkhali-bound auto-rickshaw at about 4:30 pm in front of the Parnanduali High School. leaving all four dead on the

The injured passengers an employee of the Magura See Page 12 Col 7

Calcutta daily for acceptable solution to water crisis

A leading Bengali newspaper of Calcutta has pleaded for a "clean and acceptable" solution to the water sharing problem between India and Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The daily Ananda Bazar Patrika, in an article published in its May 11 issue said the work started by the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) constituted by the water experts of the two countries in 1988 should complete its task expeditiously and reach a clean and acceptable solution to the water sharing problem.

It said India has created a permanent quarrel with Bangladesh by constructing the Farakka Barrage without the permission of the lower riparian neighbour.

The paper gave a detailed account of the Farakka problem and said when the issue was raised before the United Nations in 1977 the two countries reached an agreement under which Bangladesh was to get 34000 cusec of water annually but in the pre-monsoon period the quantum of water to be given to Bangladesh would be 27,000

The agreement was renewed for three years in 1984 but India refused to renew it further in 1988 creating a problem for Bangladesh, the See Page 12 Col 8

Jubo Dal leader shot dead in city

By DMCH Correspondent A young man, reportedly a

political activist, was murdered in the city's Jhikatola area vesterday evening. Syed Khairul Islam, 22, said

to be a local-level leader of the Jubo Dal, the youth wing of the ruling BNP, was gunned down by some unidentified persons at Munshibari Road at about 7 pm yesterday.

Fatally injured, Khairul was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) by his elder brother Aimal but the doctors declared him dead. Khairul, who passed the

HSC examination from the Ideal College last year, was hit in the forehead, chin and right

The motive behind the killing could not be known. Khairul was the son of late Syed Emdadul Haque, a resi-.

dent of 11/J Jhikatola Staff

Quarters. He was the seventh child of his parents. Khairul's murder took the number of people killed in the city over the past week to

The body was sent to the

DMCH morgue for autopsy. Malaria claims

46 in Sunamganj SUNAMGANJ. May 14: Mal-

arial situation took a serious turn in the district as at least 46 people died and some 18.359 were attacked with the disease in last few weeks, officials said today, reports UNB. Local people, however,

claimed that the actual number of deaths could be more than The disease broke out last

month in five thanas of the

district - Doarabazar, Tahirpur. Biswambharpur, Dharampasha and Sadar. The situation deteriorated due to lack of preventives and

inadequate medical teams to combat the scourge. The Civil Surgeon (CS) office sources confirmed the death toll but said they were

See Page 12 Col 2

wounded. The high level of shelling and sniping is being maintained by Bosnian Serbs besieging the Bosnian capital.

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ANNOUNCEMENT **BUDGET '95-96: Business**

leaders speak out Beginning today The Pails Star starts an interview series on the coming budget and the economic situation. Based on a random selection of business leaders we asked ten questions relating to the ongoing economic reforms. opinions and expectations

about the next budget. Mohammad Today: Arshad Ali, President of the Packaging Industries Association of Bangladesh expresses his views.

Tomorrow: Interview of S M Ziaul Haq, Chairman Bangladesh Bus, Truck Owners' Association.

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International Iran plans to build 10

N-plants in next 20 years Rao likely to face noconfidence

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Responding to drought in Bangladesh; 125,000 people will benefit from drought response intervention in 6 northern districts; and Farmers

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Congressmen stress

Metropolitan Dhaka Day by Day



Quality of Mercy is Nowhere to be Seen Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS

Ex-Kosovo PM held

PRISTINA. Yugoslavia. May 14: The last ethnic Albanian premier of the Kosovo province has been arrested for proclaiming the province's secession from Serbia, police said Sunday. Kosoyo, whose population of 1.9 million is more than 90 per cent ethnic Albanian, had been an autonomous region of Serbia un til 1989, when President Slob odan Milosevic revoked self rule. Jusuf Zejnullahu, 45. was premier until 1989. He was arrested Saturday in Pristina. reports AP.

Sunstroke claims 30 in Pakistan

MULTAN, Pakistan, May 14: More than 30 people have died from sunstroke in a heat wave currently gripping most regions of Pakistan, official and hospital sources said today Most of the fatalities were reported from rural areas of southern Sindh over the last six days as temperatures soared close to 50 degrees Celsius at various places, reports AFP.

Sudanese rebels

Rebels in southern Sudan released more than 1,000 of the 20,000 Sudanese children they are holding following ef forts by the UN children's fund to secure their release by diplomatic means, a Sudanese official said today reports AFP.

free 1000 children KHARTOUM. May 14:

