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# The Daily Star

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## Hasina tells public meeting at Ctg Clean up admn for success of arms recovery drive

CHITTAGONG, Apr 5: Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina today called for flushing out 'parties' of former BNP government from different tiers of the administration for success of the drive for recovering illegal arms.

"If the persons who obtained party-appointment from BNP, remained in the administration, the drive for recovery of arms may not be successful," she said.

The Awami League chief was addressing a mammoth public meeting this afternoon at Laidighi Maidan, organised from Staff Correspondent by the party's Chittagong city unit.

Sheikh Hasina claimed that during BNP rule, the home ministry had issued 20,000 arms licences to the "people of its choice at the behest of the then home minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury."

Hasina called upon the caretaker government to immediately recover the arms to ensure a terrorism-free election in a peaceful atmosphere.

The AL chief reiterated her demand for resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner, restructuring of the Election Commission and preparation of new voters list to ensure a free and fair election.

She called upon the people to exercise their franchise judiciously to elect a government of their choice to ensure democracy and development in the country. She also expressed gratitude to the people of Chittagong for their role in the non-cooperation movement against the BNP government for caretaker government.

Amidst cheers and thunderous applause, the Awami League chief said that the party would continue to work for the recovery of arms and the success of the drive.



Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addressing a mammoth public meeting at Laidighi Maidan in Chittagong yesterday. — Star photo

## Refusal to pay toll Armed gang storms house, kills one

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was shot dead and four other members of his family were injured when an armed gang stormed their house at South Badda under Gulshan thana in the city last night.

The gang stormed the house at around 8:30 pm firing shots indiscriminately, and hurling cocktails which left five inmates including two women injured, one of them fatally, hospital sources said.

The attackers allegedly took away 20 tolas of gold ornaments and Tk 90,000 from the house.

Robiul Islam, 30, bullet-hit in his chest and belly, died on way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The other injured were Robiul's sister Ayesha, sister-in-law Rokeya, father Abul Kashem and nephew Munna. Munna was bullet-hit and others hit by bomb splinters. They were admitted to DMCH.

Refusal to pay toll to the attackers and complaint to police against them earlier were known to be the reason behind the attack.

Meanwhile, police officials rushed to the spot and the DMCH, thana sources said. None was arrested in this connection till last night.

## No more disunity, says Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has urged all political parties to work together for ensuring people's right to work and live in peace. Let's work unitedly to ensure those rights of the people," she said at a crowded press conference at the BNP central office at Naya Paltan in the city yesterday afternoon.

"We belong to different parties for difference in our political opinions. But we should not have any conflict among ourselves so far the country, its people and democracy are concerned. We all want development of the country, welfare of the people and strengthening of democracy, end to terrorism and anarchism and elections free from the influence of money and power."

Members of the BNP Standing Committee, the highest policy-making body of the party, discussed the issue for the second consecutive day yesterday.

Earlier, the Committee met at the party central office at Naya Paltan on Thursday night to discuss preparations for the ensuring polls. The meeting, adjourned late in the night, resumed last night at the caretaker residence of party chief Begum Khaleda Zia, she was in the chair at both the meetings.

Meeting sources told The Daily Star that top BNP leaders were for closely observing the fragile unity of the Awami League, Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami before approaching JP or Jamaat for an electoral alliance, formally or informally. For this, party secretary general Abdus Salam Talukdar and a few other central leaders were assigned to

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Khaleda at press conference

## BNP discusses possibility of electoral alliance

By Nazmul Ashraf

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## Garments exporters worried 'Increase in congestion surcharge unfair'

By Staff Correspondent

The garments exporters yesterday expressed concern at the proposal to increase the congestion surcharge by 200 per cent at the Chittagong port by various shipping operators from April 8 saying, it will ruin the industrial sector.

"Such an increase will be unimaginable, unreasonable and unfair", BGMEA president Redwan Ahmed has said according to a press release of the organisation here yesterday.

The BGMEA President held a series of meetings in Chittagong with the Chairman, Chittagong Port Trust, the commissioner of Customs, the Presidents of Bangladesh Steamer Agents' Association, Bangladesh Master Stevedore Agents Association and C & F agents Association and other officials on Thursday and Friday. During the meetings he said that the importers-exporters were in no way responsible for the shipping congestion at the port.

The 'huge surcharge' imposed by shipping operators are now costing exporters and importers around US 200 dollars per 20 ft FCL container he said and added similar high charges have been fixed for different other types of containers.

He mentioned that the country's garments sector would not be able to compete in the international competitive market due to imposition of such surcharge. Besides, the country would also lose huge foreign currency.

Redwan pointed out that

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## Khaleda regrets remark on Bhutan

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chairperson and former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has regretted her remark concerning Bhutan at a public meeting in the city recently.

In her speech, she had accused a political party of conspiring against the country's independence and said, "We won't allow anybody to turn Bangladesh into Sikkim or Bhutan."

Asked on the issue at her press conference yesterday, at the party's Naya Paltan central office, the BNP chief said "I'm sorry that Bhutan was mentioned. Bhutan is an independent state and a member of the SAARC."

## Sharp increase in DSE trading

By Rafiq Hasan

Trading at the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) surged last week with shares and debentures worth over Tk 23 crore exchanging hands in 5 days business.

The All Share Price Index at the DSE rose by 22.12 points and the market capitalisation increased by Tk 197.31 crore in the week.

The All Share Price Index reached 818.93 points Thursday last from 796.81 points at the closing on March 7. The market capitalisation stood at Tk 5389.41 crore at the closing last week starting with Tk 5192.10 crore at the opening Sunday.

As many as 19 lakh 34 thousand shares and debentures were traded during the period.

A total of 461 shares were traded during the week while shares of 271 companies gained and those of 143 companies incurred losses. Issues of 47 companies remained unchanged.

The growth achieved in the week was a record in the recent past. The bourse had been experiencing a bearish trend since November last mainly due to the lingering political crisis in the country. The share market remained closed for about 54 days this year because of political turmoil and government holidays.

The floor opened on Sunday last after a closure of consecutive 23 days due to the indefinite non-cooperation programme called by some political parties.

The growth in the capital market was the result of the positive political developments in the country. Imtiaz Hossain, Chairman of the DSE told the Daily Star over telephone last night. The investors have regained confidence and returned to the floor he said and hoped that the upward trend in the capital market would continue till the next general election.

"It is a good sign that the share market boomed with the local investors despite absence of foreign buyers," he pointed out.

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## AL public meeting in city today

Awami League will hold a public meeting at the Manik Mia Avenue in the city today at 2 pm to mark the victory of the people's struggle for establishing the neutral caretaker government.

Party chief Sheikh Hasina will preside over the meeting, said a press release yesterday.

Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman has called upon the people to make the meeting a success.

## Nepal denies secret treaty with India

KATHMANDU, Apr 5: Nepal has denied allegations that a secret treaty was signed between Kathmandu and New Delhi during prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's official visit to India in February, reports AP.

The foreign ministry today dismissed the allegations by leaders of the main opposition party Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML) and reported in the media as 'totally baseless and fictitious'.

It said that during his visit to India the premier had signed the Malakali Treaty which had already been initiated by both countries during Indian foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee's visit to Nepal in January.

The Malakali river treaty calls for joint investment in hydro-electric and irrigation projects on the river and shared benefits.

## Arms recovered in city : 8 held

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested eight persons and recovered huge arms and ammunition from different parts of the city in last two days.

Sutapur police in a raid yesterday at Shasi Mohan Bashak Lane arrested Babu, 27, Kahu, 26, Nasim 25, and Yusuf 22. The police team also recovered two revolvers, two toy pistols and five bullets.

On Thursday night, Motijheel police arrested Swapan 19, Kabir, 17, Mdizur, 16, and Shahin, 17.

One sawed-off rifle was also

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## FCO report on Feb 15 election

## Opposition intimidation & ruling party rigging blamed for flaws

By Staff Correspondent

The sixth parliamentary elections were seriously flawed due to Opposition intimidation, violence and widespread manipulation by the ruling BNP, according to a report sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in London.

The report was prepared by the Electoral Reform Consultancy Services (ERCS), a London-based firm engaged by the FCO to provide observers for the February 15 parliamentary elections.

The observers, in their report, expressed their concern at the 'multiple voting observed at different centres' and said that this constituted serious malpractice.

Many reports of ballot stuffing were substantiated by the unlikely high turnout figures in some areas, with an estimated 25-30 constituencies having 40 per cent or more turnout, the report said.

In stations where voting was in progress, there was often overcrowding and confusion, the observers said, adding that far more BNP polling agents were present in the stations than the five allowed for polling stations with more than one booth. There was no adherence to the Election Commission's code of conduct.

During the count of votes, confusion about who should and who should not be present was observed, they noted. Lack of identification badges for polling officers again added to the confusion. On one site, they said, about 60 people were crammed in the room during the count. While the law allows polling agents to be present, the excessive number of BNP agents in most stations led to inevitable overcrowding.

The observer team comprising two members visited polling stations in Dhaka-5.

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**DSE MARKET**

DSE price index 818.93 (+0.02%)  
Market capital Tk 5389.41 cr  
Transactions in volume 203094  
Transactions in value Tk 3.21 cr

**Dhaka Day by Day**

Male Preening  
Page 3

**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Habibur Rahman shocked**

Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman has conduced the sad demise of US Commerce Secretary Ronald Brown. In a condolence message to US President William J. Clinton, the Chief Adviser said, "I am profoundly grieved to learn the tragic death of Ronald Brown along with his several entourage members in a plane crash in Croatia. The untimely death of Brown will not only deprive the United States of a great visionary leader, he would also be missed in Bangladesh. At this moment of great loss of the United States, the people and the government of Bangladesh join me in praying for the salvation of the departed souls and we also convey our heartfelt sympathies to the members of the bereaved families," reports BSS.

**DU classes resume today**

Classes of the Dhaka University will resume today. The authorities delayed the resumption of the classes after the non-cooperation movement was over due to thin presence of the resident student on the campus, reports UNB.

**Ban on gathering around exam centres**

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police imposed ban on gathering and movement of more than four people within 200 yards of the SSC-Dakhil exam centres for smooth and peaceful holding of the examinations beginning tomorrow. The ban will be enforced from tomorrow at 60 school and two madrasah centres in the metropolis and will continue till the examinations ends, said a DMP press release yesterday, reports UNB.

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