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Dhaka to seek explanation for drop in Ganges flow

By Staff Correspondent

Dhaka will seek to know from Delhi the reason for drop in the flow of Ganges water at the two-day senior official level talks beginning in the city today, according to sources in the water resources ministry.

Director of the Indian Joint Rivers Commission and a Deputy Secretary of the Indian Foreign Ministry arrived in the city yesterday to participate in the talks, the sources said.

Earlier, Dhaka made a request to Delhi through diplomatic channels to send a high level team to review the drop in the flow of Ganges water.

The request was made following cancellation of the proposed ministerial level JRC meeting which was scheduled to begin in Dhaka from April 10. The meeting was cancelled following political developments in India.

The official level meeting is being held invoking Clause 3 of See Page 12 Col 5

Share market scam : None arrested

By Staff Correspondent

Police could not arrest any of the 28 other accused in the share market scam cases till yesterday.

A police source said they continued their efforts to nab the accused.

Earlier, four of them, Sohail F Rahman and Salman F Rahman of Beximco Group and two directors of the group obtained ad-interim bail from the High Court Division of the Supreme Court on Thursday.

Sources concerned said the other accused are in close touch with each other. Their lawyers are preparing petitions to secure ad-interim bail from the See Page 12 Col 4

BDR on alert to stop fresh influx of Rohingyas

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 5: BDR personnel deployed along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border have been put on alert to contain any influx of Rohingyas from Arakan, official sources said.

Meanwhile, the Chittagong centre of Bangladesh Betar has broadcast an announcement advising the people to inform the authorities of any Rohingyas entering Bangladesh.

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WB stops disbursement of second tranche of jute sector adjustment credit

DSE index edges higher Pages 6,7

DSE MARKET

DSE price index 1139.54(+0.12%)
Market capital Tk 9464.53cr
Transaction in volume 230422
Transaction in value Tk 4.82cr

CSE MARKET

CSE price index 514.18(+1.14%)
Market capital Tk 7228.24cr
Transaction in volume 138285
Transaction in value Tk 18978518

New S Asian grouping likely to be floated

By M Anwarul Haq

Foreign ministers of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan are likely to endorse the formation of a new South Asian grouping styled South Asian Growth Quadrangle (SAGQ), diplomatic sources said.

The new regional bloc, if launched, will forsake the earlier concept of a sub-regional grouping within the SAARC, the sources added.

The four foreign ministers may meet in New Delhi on the sidelines of the 12th foreign ministers' meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to be held there on April 7 and 8.

Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan, talking over telephone yesterday, said that the Kathmandu deliberations had considered identifying common areas for the proposed cooperation among the four countries under the aegis of the "South Asian Growth Quadrangle."

Earlier, he told AFP and PTI in Kathmandu at the end of the

one-day foreign secretaries' meeting on April 2 that since Pakistan had reservation about the grouping, "the quadrilateral cooperation is to be pursued outside the framework of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation."

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, when asked by The Daily Star if the four countries are forming a new bloc outside SAARC, said, "It is both separate and not separate. It depends on who is looking at it and with what perception."

Nepal's Ambassador to Bangladesh Lok Bahadur Shrestha, talking to The Daily Star yesterday, hinted at the possibility of the South Asian Growth Quadrangle emerging as a separate organisation. He said that when the approach paper on sub-regional grouping was presented by Nepal at the SAARC foreign ministers' meeting in New Delhi, one country had given objection. Although

Article 7 of the SAARC Charter allows the formation of standing committees by two or more countries, all major decisions under the charter had to be taken unanimously. "If one country objects, we may have to make cooperative efforts under a new arrangement," he added.

The ambassador, however, emphasised that "SAARC is also important for us. We are entering a new phase."

Nepal has been made overall coordinator for the first phase of the South Asian Growth Quadrangle, at the Kathmandu meeting. The first phase involving feasibility studies on six areas of cooperation is due to be completed within one year.

The areas of cooperation are multimodal transportation, energy, water harnessing, environment, investment and tourism.

The Kathmandu meeting dwelt on the approach paper prepared by Nepal.

Power generation to be led by private sector: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government has taken initiatives to formulate new policies and remove the obstacles to direct investment in the country, reports UNB.

"The government is now pursuing the policy to pave the way for rapid expansion of the existing private sector and for its transformation into an engine of growth," she said.

Inaugurating a three-day national seminar on Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment at Sonargaon Hotel in the morning, Hasina said. Our commitment to democracy and market economy should convince all potential investors of the safety of their investment. The seminar, jointly organ-

ised by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific (ESCAP) and the Board of Investment (BOI), is aimed at exchanging national experience on foreign direct investment (FDI).

The Prime Minister said that responding to the liberalised foreign policy of the government, many foreign companies are showing interest in the power generation sector.

The tender procedure has already been completed for the Meghnaghat Power Plant, to be built owned and operated by the private sector, she said.

Hasina said an agreement on the Meghnaghat plant will come into effect from April 9. "We expect power generation to be led by the private sector in

future," she added.

The Prime Minister called upon local and foreign investors to invest in the country taking advantage of the policy reforms and incentives, "most attractive" in the region.

The Prime Minister hoped that the seminar would make substantial contribution towards understanding the prospects and problems of the FDI and their solutions. "This would add to the existing flows of FDI."

"We are aware that despite liberal and pragmatic policies of the government, we still have miles to go," she said adding that "the administration" has been geared up to ensure speedy implementation of the policies See Page 12 Col 1

Pabna poura chairman shot dead

PABAN, Apr 5: Pabna Pourasava chairman and Awami League leader Advocate Sheikh Shahidullah Bachchu was shot dead, reportedly by unknown assailants, near Tebulia Agriculture Farm in Sadar thana on Friday night, reports UNB.

Police said they recovered the body of the 38-year-old poura chairman from his car at 10 pm. He was shot in the head twice from close range.

Family sources said Advocate Bachchu, a former organising secretary of Pabna district Awami League, went out of his residence with Tk 3 lakh after receiving a phone call around 7:30 pm saying that he would return by 9 pm.

But police, who rushed to Pabna-Ishwardi highway receiving a news of road accident, found the body in the car parked on a nearby road, about 100 yards from the highway.

Nine people were arrested for their alleged involvement in the killing during a late night operation by police. The names of the arrested were not disclosed.

The body was sent to Pabna Sadar hospital today for autopsy. A case was filed with Sadar police.

District Bar Association president Advocate Abdur Razzak, general secretary Advocate See Page 12 Col 5

Country-wide BNP demonstration today

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will stage demonstrations across the country today demanding release of party leaders and workers and withdrawal of false cases filed against the activists of the party and its front organisations, reports UNB.

The party will bring out processions and hold meetings at all thana and district headquarters.

The programme was announced by BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan at a press conference in the city on Tuesday.

As part of the programme, also to protest the arrest of four top-ranking party leaders, the BNP will hold a meeting in front of its central office at Naya Paltan at 3:30 pm.



BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia inaugurating the 3-day Conference on National Solidarity in the city yesterday.

Confce on Nat'l Solidarity opens

Khaleda calls for unity of 'nationalist forces'

By Staff Correspondent

BNP chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia opened a three-day Conference on National Solidarity in the city yesterday with a call for unity of all "nationalist forces" to protect the national independence and sovereignty.

"We'll have to unite all nationalist parties, groups and individuals to resist and defeat the expansionists and their local agents... We feel that lack of unity, especially among the nationalist and patriotic forces, throws the nation into the grip of expansionists and the local enemies and endanger the country's independence and sovereignty," she told the opening session of the conference at the premises of the Institution of Engineers. She inaugurated the conference as chief guest.

The conference, organised by pro-BNP think-tanks, "aims at protecting national independence and sovereignty, establishing democracy and human rights, forging national unity and launching mass resistance against all acts of aggression and conspiracies."

The three-day conference, split into six sessions, is scheduled to hold discussions on Nationalism and National Identity; national sovereignty and regional cooperation; State-sponsored terrorism and human rights; government. See Page 12 Col 6

JS session from May 10

President Shahabuddin Ahmed has summoned the session of the Jatiya Sangsad on May 10 at 3 pm, said an official announcement yesterday, reports UNB.

This will be the fourth session of the seventh parliament. The third session was prorogued on March 13.

AL Nat'l Council now on May 6, 7

Star Report

The National Council of the ruling Awami League will now be held on May 6 and 7, one day ahead of the previous schedule, party sources said last night.

The decision was taken at a party meeting held on Friday with party chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair. The date for party's triennial council was changed due to pre-occupations of the PM.

The date for the AL council was earlier fixed for May 7 and 8 at a meeting of the party's central working committee on March 21 last.

Meanwhile, preparations are in full-swing to hold a party public meeting in the capital tomorrow.

The venue of the public meeting has been shifted from Pan- See Page 12 Col 3

Feni killings

None of the 48 accused held

FENI, Apr 5: None of 48 persons accused of killing Jubo Dal leader Nasir and JCD leader Tushar has been arrested so far though the deadline issued by BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia expires Monday, reports UNB.

Begum Zia, at a meeting in Feni on Monday, announced that a tough action programme would be given in the Chittagong division if the killers of Nasir and Tushar were not brought to book in seven days.

Police, however, arrested five, including a Jatiya Party-backed Chhatra Samaj leader, who are out of the FIR. Some 48 people were accused in the FIR by Tushar's father and Jubo Dal leader.

On March 27, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader Tushar was killed by terrorists and Nasir See Page 12 Col 2

Young man beaten to death in city

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was beaten to death by a group of people at AGB colony in Motijheel area in the city yesterday.

The dead was identified as Monir, 25, of Khilgaon.

Police said that local people attacked Monir when he and his accomplices demanded toll from the labourers of a under-construction building behind AGB colony mosque. Monir's group also assaulted some labourers as they failed to pay the toll of Tk 2,000.

Monir sustained severe injuries when he was beaten up by a group of unidentified people on Friday night. He succumbed to his injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital the next morning, hospital sources said.

The body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy.

868 more tribal refugees return

KHAGRACHHARI, Apr 5: Eight hundred and sixty eight more tribal refugees returned home through Tabalchhari border from camps in the Indian state of Tripura today, reports UNB.

Khagrachhari local government Parishad chairman Samiran Dewan and Ranganmati local government parishad chairman Rabinlal Chakma welcomed the returnees.

With this, a total of 5,132 tribal refugees came back home so far. Repatriation will be continued till April 7.

Some 861 refugees of 150 families will return home tomorrow, on the 9th day of repatriation.

Australian DPM due tomorrow

Australian Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer arrives in Dhaka tomorrow on a three-day official visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury will receive him at the airport. During the tour, the Australian DPM will call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Fischer, who is in charge of the trade portfolio, will hold official talks with Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed on bilateral matters as well as regional and international issues of common concern.

An agreement between two private companies — Multimode and Brandmill — on joint-venture industries is expected to be signed during the trip.



City's Shantinagar area after rainfall yesterday.

—Star photo

Dr Malek tells The Daily Star PM sincere about holding public debate with BNP chief

By Reaz Ahmad

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is sincere in her intention to hold a public debate with Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and her predecessor Begum Khaleda Zia on urgent national issues.

This was said by Dr S A Malek, Political Advisor to the Prime Minister, in an interview with The Daily Star on Thursday.

The Prime Minister earnestly wants a debate to be held to let people know viewpoints of both the parties in power and the main opposition on much-talked issues of current time," he said.

Referring to a commentary ran by this newspaper on Wednesday last, the newly appointed advisor to the premier said, "Of course, the two prime leaders of the country can have private talks beforehand to set the agenda for a TV-debate."

tional dailies and news agencies on Monday last, Sheikh Hasina had expressed her willingness to discuss with Begum Khaleda Zia all issues now facing the nation and participate in a live Television programme to answer all questions.

The day after, The Daily Star ran a commentary suggesting that such a dialogue in public between the top two political leaders could be preceded by private-level talks.

Talking to this correspondent at his office in the Prime Minister's Secretariat, Dr Malek said, "The olive branch extended by the Prime Minister is not altogether a new posture, she is always in favour of dialogue. What is required now is one step advancement by Begum Khaleda Zia with all sincerity."

"In a democracy, relationship between Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition should be very sweet. People simply loved to see two of their admired leaders sitting

together. It is a very sweet sight. People simply loved to see two of their admired leaders sitting

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See Page 12 Col 1

City waterlogging to be reduced by 80pc: WASA

By Staff Correspondent

The extent of waterlogging in the coming rainy season will be reduced by at least 80 per cent, claimed WASA officials saying that a number of steps have been taken to solve the problem.

To keep the water flow of the city unhindered WASA has almost completed cleaning up different points of the 170 km-long network of the storm sewerage which cost about Tk 1.2 crore.

Moreover, with the recent removal of injunction from a site of the planned storm sewerage in Bijoynagar, WASA has speeded up the construction work on the box culvert which has long encroached the passage of the water.

At the point of Fakirer Pool, where an injunction is now in force, on the site of the storm sewerage, we have dug up the existing narrow passage and made it deeper so that the water does not get logged," said an official of the sewerage department of WASA.

The Segun Bagicha Canal behind the Bangladesh Bank which became "almost en-

See Page 12 Col 3

Draft document for NAM meet Curtailment of UN veto power proposed

NEW DELHI, Apr 5: Amendment to the UN Charter to curtail and rationalise veto power and prevent encroachment on the role and functioning of the General Assembly are among various proposals to be considered by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) foreign ministers conference beginning here Monday, reports BSS.

The draft final document, prepared by host India for the conference underlined the need for strengthening, revitalising and democratising the UN system so that the organisation could respond to the aspirations of its members in the 21st century.

The draft document says the NAM must continue to contribute to this process, influencing the debate and proposed reforms being discussed in various working groups.

The documents express concern over encroachment on the role and functioning of the UN General Assembly and calls for

a balance between its role and that of the Security Council as mandated in the UN Charter.

The document recalled that discussions in the open-ended working group on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council have shown that while a convergence of views has emerged on a number of issues, important differences still exist on many others.

The veto should be curtailed and rationalised the chapter should be amended so that as a first step the veto power should only apply to actions taken under chapter seven of the charter.

The document said the reforms of the Security Council should not be linked to other UN reforms and called for convening of the general conference for the revision of the charter at an appropriate time.

Meanwhile, differences developed on certain political is-

See Page 12 Col 4