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Talks on Tullow, Chevron-Texaco partnership tomorrow

Star Report

The government will hold a negotiation meeting tomorrow between Irish Company Tullow and US joint venture Chevron-Texaco over a partnership between them for oil and gas exploration in Block 9.

Chevron-Texaco will give its opinion about sharing Tullow's 'ambitious' proposal for Block 9, which includes drilling of 10 exploratory wells at a cost of 58 million US dollars, at the meeting.

On January 9 last, the US joint venture had discussed with Tullow, under the auspices of the government, and took Tullow's proposal for review.

Meanwhile, Malaysian company Petronas and US oil giant Mobil in a joint letter on January 14 expressed their grievances about the shifting decision of the government in offering them blocks.

Earlier on December 18, Petronas and Mobil had accepted the government suggestion at a meeting to sit with Tullow about a partnership in Block 9.

Dhaka to host confce on UN peacekeeping next month

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh will host an international conference on UN peacekeeping operations early next month.

The conference will be part of the United Nations' global programmes to mark the 50th anniversary of its peacekeeping operations.

A seminar on 'South Asia's Peacekeeping Experience' will be held in Dhaka from February 9 to 12 to highlight the participation of member countries of the South Asian region in the peacekeeping missions.

Bangladesh Armed Forces Division along with the US Pacific Command will jointly organise the international conference in Dhaka.

The seminar will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Among the countries that would participate in the peacekeeping conference will be Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

There would be two participants representing the United Nations headquarters.

Observers from Australia, Canada, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia and the Philippines are expected to join the conference.

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One chopped to death in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Jan 24: One person was chopped to death by some miscreants at Dopachara village under Patiya thana last night, reports BSS.

A group of miscreants called Manik Das out of his house and chopped him. He succumbed to his injuries later, police said.

Police recovered the body of Manik Das. A case was filed with Patiya thana.

The reason behind the murder could not be known immediately. Investigation is going on police added.

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Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Jan	Sehri	Iftar
25	25	5-20	5-43
26	26	5-19	5-44
27	27	5-19	5-45



A prospective buyer admires a Tk 60,320 dress with gold trimmings put up for Eid sale at a boutique in Banani UAE market yesterday. — Star photo: Anisur Rahman

Lewinsky ready to testify affair with Clinton

WASHINGTON, Jan 24: Monica Lewinsky is offering to testify that she had a sexual relationship with US President Bill Clinton, if Whitewater prosecutors will give her immunity from perjury, a source familiar with the negotiations said today, reports AP.

Such a posture leaves open, however, what Lewinsky would say on the most serious allegations against Clinton: whether he or his friend, Vernon Jordan, encouraged her to lie about relationship under oath.

The developments came as Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr, the Whitewater prosecutor, was continuing to subpoena witnesses and gather evidence in the probe of whether Clinton conspired to cover up the alleged affair with Lewinsky, a former White House intern.

Lewinsky is heard on secret tape recordings telling a friend and Pentagon co-worker, Linda Tripp, that she had an affair

with Clinton and that he and Jordan encouraged her to deny it.

Reuter adds: Lewinsky said the President told her that oral sex didn't count as a relationship, a source who heard tapes of her conversations told the Los Angeles Times.

In tapes turned over to the office of Starr, Lewinsky says 'that she engaged only in oral sex with the President and that Clinton told her he did not consider such an act to constitute a sexual affair.' The Times reported in Saturday editions.

'Monica never claims it was intercourse, the source told the newspaper.

The unnamed source, described by the Times as 'close to the matter,' also said that the tapes indicate that Clinton frequently called her at home at night to engage in phone sex.

'Monica said they had phone sex that there was a lot of phone sex,' the source, who listened to about 10 per cent of nearly 20 hours of tape, told the newspaper.

Lewinsky's comments were taped secretly by Linda Tripp, a source said.

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'Unsafe' anesthesia units being purchased for govt hospitals

By Naimul Haq

Anesthesia machines worth over Tk 1.5 crore are being purchased for some government hospitals and thana health complexes despite objection by a technical committee that the specified machines would not be safe for patients.

The Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD) under the Directorate of Health Services is purchasing the 33 anesthesia machines with World Bank assistance under the government's Fourth Population and Health Project.

Sources said the CMSD has decided to purchase the machines, modelled Seneca-2000, from Pakistan, reportedly

manufactured there under licence from Dragu, a German company.

The technical committee in its report had said that the machines were of 'heterogeneous origin and assembled using dissimilar parts', the sources claimed.

The IC comprises experts from the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Midford Hospital and the IPGMR.

When contacted, a member of the technical committee said, 'this machine may not be safe due to its heterogeneous origin'. He questioned quality and

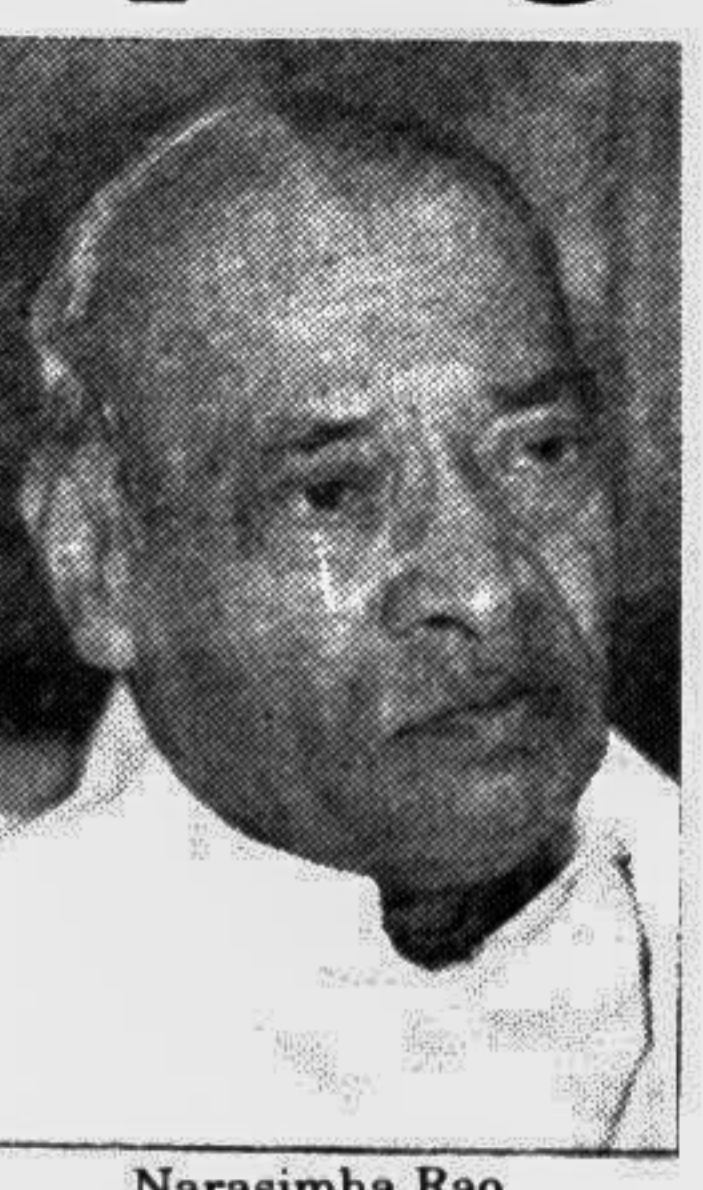
safety of the machine.

Another member of the TC said, 'It is an insult to the committee members. We are probably the best experts on the subject in the country. The government is ignoring our valuable recommendations.'

Another member of the TC when asked to give his opinion said, 'The machines are not user-friendly as far as I can recall. My colleagues also gave similar views. Because the machines did not satisfy safety requirements we decided not to recommend purchase of as those machines because they would involve so many pieces.'

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Rao denied nomination, Congress apologises for Mosque demolition



Narasimha Rao

NEW DELHI, Jan 24: Former prime minister PV Narasimha Rao was denied nomination by the Congress which held him responsible for the failure to prevent the demolition of the Babri Mosque on December 6, 1992 and unconditionally apologised to the people for the episode, reports agencies.

Rao, who represented Berhampur Lok Sabha constituency in Orissa, will not be given the ticket, Congress president Sitaram Kesri said while releasing the party manifesto for the coming general elections here today.

In its 56-page manifesto, the Congress unreservedly apologised to the people of India for its failure to prevent the tragic events which led to the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The Congress said the stubbornness of the United Front in

not dropping the DMK ministers after the party (DMK) was indicted by the Jain Commission and the 'adventurism' of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) 'in attempting to buy up MPs to create an artificial majority' had forced the mid-term polls on the country.

'Unholy combinations and unnatural alliances would have otherwise subverted Indian democracy,' the Congress said while defending its decision to withdraw support to the Gujral government.

The election manifesto described the Front's theory that the coalition era has come to stay in the country as 'hollow, baseless and dangerous.'

It said the Indian federalism as envisaged under the Constitution has stood the test of time. The Congress contended that a combination of regional parties

Islamabad appeals to citizens to donate for 'noble cause' 932 families of stranded Pakistanis to be repatriated in three months

ISLAMABAD, Jan 24: Pakistan today expressed its 'firm' commitment to repatriate 238,000 stranded Pakistanis from Bangladesh and appealed to citizens to donate funds for the purpose, reports AFP.

The present government has firmly renewed its pledge to do all it can to bring and rehabilitate these stranded Pakistanis, said an official statement, carried by the official Associated Press of Pakistan news agency.

The statement appealed to citizens for 'generous' contributions to an international trust launched for the 'noble cause' by the Saudi Arabia-based relief organisation, Rabita Al-Alam

Al-Islami, and Pakistan in 1988.

Hundreds of Pakistanis, known as Biharis, were repatriated in 1992 during current prime minister Nawaz Sharif's earlier term in office, but the process was halted after Benazir Bhutto succeeded him in 1993.

The repatriated families were resettled in housing units built by the Rabita trust in Punjab, Sharif's home province.

The Pakistan pledge followed Sharif's talks with Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina Wajed in Dhaka earlier this month after a three-nation economic summit with her and Indian prime minister Inder Kumar Gujral.

The present government has firmly renewed its pledge to do all it can to bring and rehabilitate these stranded Pakistanis, (who) number over 238,000 according to census carried out jointly in 1991-92, the statement said.

Some 932 families will be brought to Pakistan within the next three months and put up in housing units constructed by the Rabita trust at Mian Channu in Punjab, it added.

Out of a planned 41,500 housing units in various districts of Punjab, at an estimated cost of 250 million dollars, about 1,000 units have been completed at Mian Channu in 1994.

'Our gigantic humanitarian programme needs your attention and generous support,' the appeal told Pakistanis, asking them to contribute money to two special bank accounts for donations in foreign and local currencies.

These Pakistanis have been living under indescribable conditions in Bangladesh for over a quarter of a century for no reason other than their pride in calling themselves Pakistanis, it said.

Urdu-speaking Biharis originally migrated from India to the then East Pakistan when the Sub-continent was partitioned in 1947 after Britain

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A weeping mother's appeal to Home Minister

By Staff Correspondent

A weeping mother appealed to Home Minister Rafiqul Islam yesterday for arrest of the killer of her son and proper action against him.

Sufia Begum of the city's Sayedabad area, whose son Sagor was murdered allegedly by a notorious terrorist last month when he refused to pay a toll of Tk 10,000, appealed to the minister for arrest of Munna, the alleged assailant.

Rafiqul Islam, who was attending a seminar at the Jatiya Press Club, assured Sufia of taking immediate action in this regard. 'I will summon the

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World Leprosy Day today

The World Leprosy Day will be observed in the country as elsewhere in the world today.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the occasion.

President in his message stressed on massive campaign to popularise multi-drug treatment.

He said the treatment recommended by the World Health Organisation has achieved considerable success in combating the disease.

He called upon the health workers to come forward to make the campaign against leprosy a success.

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Bangladesh youths beat WI, emerge champions

Bangladesh emerged champions in the plate competition of the MTN World Youth (Under-19) Cricket tournament beating West Indies in the final in South Africa yesterday, reports UNB.

Batting first, West Indies youth team scored 243 for eight in stipulated 50 overs, according to a message received by the Bangladesh Cricket Board last night.

West Indian cricketer Gail scored an unbeaten 142 and was adjudged man-of-the-match.

Mushfiqur Rahman Babu captured three wickets for 48

runs while Sabbir Khan and Sumith took one wicket each giving away 32 and 36 runs respectively.

In reply, Bangladesh reached their target making 245 runs for the loss of four wickets in 42 overs with skipper Al Shahrar (60) scoring an unconquered 90.

Melrab Hossain Opee made 64, Rashedul Haq 34, Hannan Sarkar 20, Mushfiqur Rahman Babu 20 and Sumith not out 2 for Bangladesh.

State Minister for Youth, Sports and Culture Obaidul Quader congratulated Bangladesh team for their success.

Biman resumes domestic flights

By Special Correspondent

Bangladesh Biman's lone ATP could not fly on Friday due to mechanical failure, leaving four domestic flights cancelled.

It was repaired for some trouble in its LP compressor on Friday. But foggy weather did not allow it to haul passengers later in the day.

It made four flights yesterday, Biman sources said.

The trouble in Biman's domestic wing is expected to be over sometime next month when the airline completes formalities to procure a F-28 aircraft from a French company, TAT.

It signed a memorandum of understanding for dry-leasing the aircraft on Thursday.

Another F-28 is due to join the domestic fleet next month along with an ATP after overhauling, the sources said.

Biman's four-aircraft domestic service had been in disarray following damage of a F-28 due to crash landing in Sylhet last month and accident of an ATP earlier.

Akhtaruzzaman defiant, for review of action

By Nazmul Ashraf and Reaz Ahmed

An angry M Akhtaruzzaman, stripped of his powers as a BNP leader, yesterday lashed out at some of his senior colleagues calling them 'extremists' and 'fundamentalists'.

According to the rebel Opposition lawmaker, a former major in the Army, party chief Khaleda Zia was forced to take the disciplinary measures against him 'in the face of mounting pressure by the extremists surrounding her'.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, he identified BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed and two other central leaders — Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, MP and Amanullah Aman, MP as the key players influencing Khaleda Zia for taking the action against him.

Still clinging to his position on BNP's return to the Jatiya Sangsad, a defiant Akhtaruzzaman says he will submit a review petition to the party chief on the action against him

after the coming Eid.

The BNP legislator also alleged that Moudud Ahmed and Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury had joined the party with a 'mission to convert it into a fundamentalist and fanatic political party. We can't allow their mission to succeed.'

Akhtaruzzaman termed Amanullah Aman an 'extortionist' alleging 'extortionism (chadabazi) is his main source of income'.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Moudud Ahmed called Akhtaruzzaman's allegations 'not only false but also without any substance'.

'It was neither decided by any individual nor any group or under anybody's influence. The action was purely democratic,' Moudud said.

He blamed Akhtaruzzaman for 'exceeding the framework of democracy practised by any political party or any organisation.'

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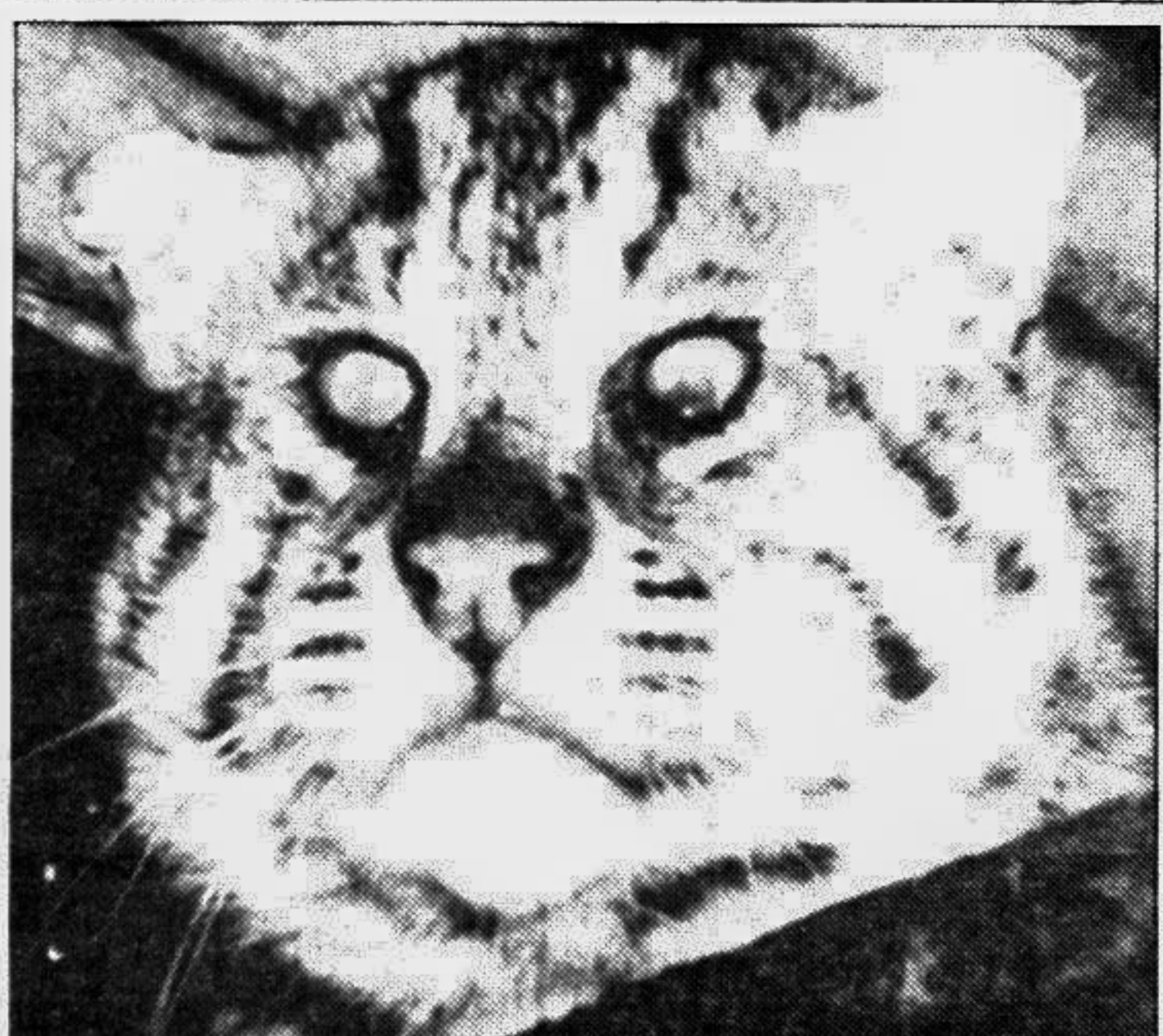
Cong manifesto 'Close ties with Bangladesh, Nepal if voted to power'

NEW DELHI, Jan 24: Congress Party today said that if voted to power in the coming general elections it would work to improve relations with neighbours including Bangladesh, reports BSS.

'It will work closely with Bangladesh and Nepal to launch a new initiative for the integrated development of the Himalayan river system,' Congress president Sitaram Kesri said while releasing the party manifesto at a press conference.

Cooperation in other areas like power and natural gas will

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The fishing cat brought to Mirpur Zoo from Netrakona. — Star photo

Another fishing cat beaten to death

By Shehab Ahmed

A fishing cat was killed by villagers at Pukuria in Kaliganj thana of Jhenaidah Friday evening and its male partner escaped with injuries, breaking through a siege by them at a sugarcane field.

The helpless female cat was beaten to death by people who rushed to a 'tiger' alarm by Saiful Islam Khan, a farmer who spotted the pair late in the afternoon.

Our Jhenaidah correspondent Delwar Hossain reported yesterday that hundreds of people with machetes and spikes rushed and surrounded the cats and killed the female one.

They later left the cat hanging from a tree with its tail severed. Police, however, expressed their ignorance about the killing of the animal protected by law.

With this, the number of fishing cats killed this year rose to two.

Another cat was beaten to death by people at Tangaur haor in Sunamganj district two weeks ago, said Anisuzzaman Khan, executive director of Nature Conservation Movement, who visited the area recently.

Earlier on December 12, a pair of fishing cats was surrounded by shepherds at a village in Durgapur, Netrakona, when the female one had just given birth to five cubs.

The mother cat fought the shepherds and their dogs. The father tried to protect the cubs crouching on them near a farmer's house.

All, except the mother cat, were caught. Later, the cubs and the male cat were brought to

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India proposes peace talks with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Jan 24: Pakistan said today it had received proposals from India to break a deadlock in peace talks between the two arch-rivals, reports Reuter.

A foreign ministry spokesman said the talks could resume if Islamabad found new Delhi to have 'come back' to an agreement reached in June last year in Islamabad on an eight-point agenda, including the dispute over the Himalayan region of Kashmir.

He declined to give details of the Indian proposals, which follow still undisclosed Pakistani proposals conveyed to New Delhi early last month.

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Indian counterpart Inder Kumar Gujral

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Bangladesh-Japan consultation meet begins

The two day annual consultation meeting between Bangladesh and its largest bilateral development partner Japan began in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The understanding reached in the meeting forms the basis of Japanese assistance to Bangladesh in the next financial year.

The main issues of discussion were the Japan's ODA policy and development assistance to Bangladesh, economic policy and development plan of Bangladesh, implementation of on-going projects and programmes proposed for future Japanese assistance.

Suhel Ahmed, leader of Bangladesh delegation and Takeshi Yagi, leader of the six-member Japanese delegation, spoke at the opening session.

The Japanese delegation headed by Takeshi Yagi, Director, Grant Aid Division of the Economic Co-operation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, arrived in Dhaka on Friday.

The Japanese mission will leave Dhaka for Tokyo tomorrow.

Dacoity at Mohammadpur apartment

By Staff Correspondent

Dacoits robbed about Tk 90,000 in gold ornaments, cash and valuables from an apartment at Shekhetek under Mohammadpur thana in the city Friday night.

Meanwhile, Mohammadpur police arrested five alleged dacoits with arms and ammunition from Tallabagh area in connection with the dacoity and recovered the stolen goods from their possession early yesterday.

According to police, the arrested were identified as Tuhin, 25, Abdus Sattar, 28, Khokon, 26, Alam, 25, and Yakub, 27.

A gang of about six people equipped with sharp weapons and explosives rang the calling bell of the ground floor flat of Shah Zaman at PC Culture Housing Society at about 9pm.

Dacoits stormed into the apartment, as soon as Zaman opened the main door of the house. Brandishing arms they confined the inmates of the house in a room, police said adding that the gang took cash, gold ornaments, electronic goods and clothes and left after an operation of about half an hour.

Being informed police conducted a raid and arrested the five persons with the stolen goods at about 1:30 am yesterday. Police also recovered five cocktails, two machetes and three rounds of bullets from the arrested persons.

Three separate cases were lodged with Mohammadpur thana in this regard.

Shops, godown gutted at Barisal

BARISAL, Jan 24: Some hardware shops and a godown were gutted in a fire in the early hours of today in Hatkhola area of the town, reports BSS.

The fire originated from a store and soon engulfed the adjacent shops and the godown at around 5-30 am, fire brigade sources said.

Critically injured Sajal, 35, and an unidentified businessman were admitted to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital for treatment.

Firefighters from Barisal and Jhalakati rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze after an hour.

Chief Whip Abul Hasanat Abdullah, State Minister for Jute and Textiles AK Faizul Hq, Divisional Commissioner M Yahia Mollah, deputy commissioner and police super visited the place this morning. They assured the businessmen of necessary help.