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PHILIPS

### CHT accord won't be scrapped: Hasina

PATIYA, Mar 28: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today asked opposition BNP to "earn people's confidence instead of trying to create artificial issues for a movement," reports UNB. She referred to the threat of movement and long march towards CHT by BNP and said people's movement cannot be built up by "creating artificial issues or propagating falsehoods."

who earned independence at the cost of their blood they can never sell out the interest of the nation.

"BNP was not born when we were fighting for independence," she said adding Awami League will protect the country's sovereignty and independence at the cost of blood.

She said people know very well who had sold out the country's interest by turning it into a market of Indian goods.

"We have protected the country's interest and reduced the trade gap with India that had mounted during the BNP rule. We have signed the water treaty with India to establish country's right to the Ganges water," she said.

"Now we are planning to construct the Ganges barrage to utilise every drop of the Ganges water in a planned way for increasing production and protecting environment."

### FDI: Law & order

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respite. Over one hundred party workers from districts come to the AL office at the Bangabandhu Avenue to seek ministers' recommendations for getting jobs and transfers and to express their grievances on local issues.

Explaining the government's 'Economic Diplomacy', Abul Hasan said, "Economies of South-East Asian countries will recover fast from the recent slowdown but, we have to shape our fate by attracting foreign investment quickly."

Referring to the six sub-regional groupings within the ASEAN, the state minister said formation of BIMSTEC and South Asian Growth Quadrangle will send positive signals to donors as well as foreign investors as regards foreign direct investment.

Earlier, Zillur Rahman, also General Secretary of AL, told the party workers that except requests for development work, he could help none seeking jobs, transfers and tender offers.

### Dacoity

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Ichhakhada in Magura district at about 3.30 am and started looting valuables of the passengers. Two passengers received stab injuries when they tried to resist the dacoits.

Of them, Mansur Ali, 45, a trader of village Keragachhe under Kaloraa thana of Satkhira district succumbed to stab injuries at Jhenidah sadar hospital at about 6 am. The dacoits left the vehicle near Kashtasagra about 5-km from Jhenidah.



Two buses skidded off the road and fell into a roadside ditch while trying to overtake each other at Shanpar in Siddhirganj yesterday. —Star photo

### 9 killed

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bound Bhai-Bon Paribahan and Ranganj-bound Monohar Paribahan, had started from Dhaka.

Local people said that suddenly they heard a big bang. They rushed to the spot hearing screams of passengers confined in the overturned vehicles and tried to rescue them.

Firebrigade personnel from Dhaka and police joined them after half an hour. Firebrigade personnel recovered the bodies of Jotsna Begum, a 45-year-old unidentified man and a 35-year-old unidentified woman from inside the Bhai-Bon Paribahan. The bodies were sent to Narayanganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy, our correspondent added.

Drivers of both the buses fled away after the accident.

### Two killed in Kishoreganj

Two people including a minor boy were run over by a bus at Niamatpur Bazar in Sadar thana in Kishoreganj district yesterday, according to UNB.

Police said the victims, Safiqul Islam, 16, and Rubel, 11, of village Bhatia of Karimganj thana, were killed on the spot when a Chamma Bandar-bound bus from Kishoreganj ran over them at about 4 pm. They were riding a bicycle.

Angry people put barricade on the road for three hours protesting the incident.

Police seized the bus the driver and helper managed to flee the spot.

### Gorai re-excavation

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Sundarbans during the dry season," he said.

Prof S Z Haider of Dhaka University said that one of his studies showed the salinity in the southwest has gone alarmingly high, creeping up to 200-km on-shore.

Ministry of Water Resources studies showed the level of salinity is rising during the dry season.

It said as a result of diversion of fresh water in the upstream, salinity levels have increased with a resultant decline in productivity of the mangrove forests to a mere 1.12 cubic metre/hectare.

Although causes have not been finally established, the study said: "The phenomenon of 'top dying' which has afflicted various species including the highly valued 'sundari' trees is generally attributed to stress caused by salinisation and siltation, as well as reduction in flooding level."

"Low flows on the Ganges have exacerbated the potentially damaging effects of water pollution from industry or agrochemicals with consequences to public health, and the Sundarbans and other wetlands habitats are irreversibly damaged," it added.

To save the Sundarbans, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have drawn up a detailed management plan for the forest

### Transport strike in N dists called off

BOGRA, Mar 28: Road communications of 11 northern districts with capital Dhaka and rest of the country resumed today following withdrawal of transport strike, reports UNB.

Bogra Transport Workers' Union sources said they called off the strike this morning as the check posts set up at two points in Sirajganj district have been withdrawn.

Bogra Transport Owners' Workers Action Committee had enforced the strike on Friday following a dispute over raising toll by transport workers

### UN has paid \$3.2m to Bangladeshi peacekeepers

The United Nations has paid 3.2 million US dollar to Bangladesh for the services rendered by its troops to the UN Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) and UN Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM-II), said an official handout here yesterday, reports UNB.

It said the UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations has forwarded the cheques to Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury.

With this, the total dues paid by the UN to Bangladesh since the visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in October 1996 amounted to 35.8 million US dollar.

The payment of UNOSOM was due for long time and was made as a follow-up to a recent discussion held between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in Tehran during the recent OIC summit.

### CHT Bill

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tions related to a) administrative and the work of public officers, b) the maintenance of public order and c) the preparation and implementation of plans relating to public services and economic development.

The Article 60 says about conferring power on the local purposes, to prepare their budgets and maintain funds.

Referring to special privilege of the tribal people through accord, he said the advancement of any backward section of the society has been ensured by the Constitution.

The Law Minister said, "If there is any ambiguity or anything repugnant to the Constitution, the parliament will take care of it and such provision shall not be implemented by law."

Dispelling opposition's apprehension, the Law Minister said "Foremost thing is this that no legislature is authorised to do anything that goes against the Constitution."

He said Article 26 (2) said that no law inconsistent with any part of fundamental rights as enshrined in the Constitution shall be legal.

Even then there is the Supreme Court which is the protector of the Constitution, Khasru said, adding that if there is anything unconstitutional, any citizen can go to the court and seek redress of it.

"There is no hide and seek. We want to discuss the bill with open mind in parliament and parliament will decide as the supreme authority to take decision on the bill," the Law Minister said.

### 500mw addl power generated during BNP rule: Khaleda

JAMALPUR, Mar 28: Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia today threatened to launch an out-governance agitation soon if Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina failed to resolve the vexing problems and ensure public security, reports UNB.

"We've given them 21 months time... We'll soon announce the action programme to unseat this government through movement if it fails to resolve the electricity, gas and water crises, protect the sanctity of mothers and interest of peasants and workers."

The BNP chairperson issued the harsh warning to the government from a big public meeting at Singhajani High School ground this afternoon, on the

second-day of her three-day mass contact tour of Netrakona, Jamalpur and Sherpur districts.

The BNP chief alleged that the country is facing 30 to 40 lakh metric tons of food deficit, causing "silent famine" in northern districts.

Referring to shortage of electricity, she said BNP during its rule had generated an additional 500 MW power and there was no power crisis.

Blaming the government for "disastrous" state of economy, Khaleda said, "wrong foreign and economic policy of Awami League has not only crippled the country's trade, commerce and industries but also jeopardised the territorial integrity."

Referring to the CHT accord, Begum Zia said the government is trying to hand over one-tenth of Bangladesh to India through the conspiratorial deal.

Begum Zia referred to discussions the BNP government had had tribal leaders and said, "We never wanted trouble in the name of peace, we never agreed giving up the country's territory to others."

On her way to Jamalpur from Netrakona, the BNP chairperson addressed wayside rallies at Muktagachha and Shambhuganj.

### BJP: Trust vote

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Pradesh. "We are not supporting the BJP government, but we are also not going to take any move which will strengthen the Congress Party, because we are fighting the Congress," Naidu told reporters.

On Tuesday, Vajpayee's coalition threw its backing behind GMC Balayogi of the TDP in the vote for Speaker in a move many have linked to his party's decision to help the BJP in the vote of confidence.

Naidu is worried a Congress government at the centre would help its regional arm in state elections in Andhra Pradesh expected later this year. But he also has to contend with his party's Muslim supporters who would frown on any alliance with the Hindu nationalist BJP.

That dilemma has kept Naidu from doing anything more than hint his 12 federal lawmakers will abstain from Vajpayee's confidence vote. He was expected to tell them whether to vote only at the last moment.

A second regional party, the National Conference, said Friday its two lawmakers would abstain.

### Hannan Airport

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The development work of the airport has been taken up with financial assistance of Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund of Japan OECF.

Under the Tk 541 project, a new terminal building will be constructed while the runway will be expanded and air trafficking system modernised.

With implementation of the project, the airport will facilitate operation of wide aircraft like boeing 747 and DC-10 and handling of more than 500,000 passengers annually.

The Prime Minister hoped the development of the M A Hannan International Airport, as complementary to the maritime, will be able to cope with the increased economic activities in the region.

The Prime Minister said a similar development plan is under implementation for development of Sylhet Osmani Airport. Construction work of two new airports at Bagerhat and Bogra has also been undertaken.

She informed that the first phase of the work on the Cargo Village in Dhaka will be completed by June next at a cost of Tk 28 crore, she added.

Sheikh Hasina recalled the role of Japanese government in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh.

### US team

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tion includes J Joshep Grandmason, Director of the US Trade and Development (USTDA) and Rita R Murrell, Senior Loan Officer, Asia/Africa Division of the Export-Import Bank of the United States