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## Pakistan to sign CTBT before Sept this yr

From Syed Talat Hussain

ISLAMABAD, Feb 6: Pakistan is likely to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty before September this year, but may hold on longer on Treaty ratification, highly-placed defence sources confirmed on Thursday.

"It is more or less decided that we will put our signatures on the CTBT before September 1999", a source said.

Denying that there was a link between US Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott's visit to Pakistan for the eighth round of talks with foreign secretary Shamsad Ahmad and the informal decision to sign the CTBT, sources said that the move is 'independent of the American pressure' on Islamabad on the issue.

"We have been weighing this option for some time and are still looking at it from many angles. It is our view that our national security interests are not in the least affected by signing the CTBT. The American pressure has been on us but when we meet the September deadline it will be independent of this factor," one of the sources pointed out.

The joint statement issued at the end of the eighth round of

Talbott-Shamsad talks contained only a passing reference to the CTBT. Pakistan reiterated its position on the CTBT as enunciated by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in his address to the UNGA (United Nations General Assembly).

Officially unconfirmed reports however suggest that Strobe Talbott during his meeting with Shamsad Ahmad was strong on the point that Pakistan should take the step of signing the CTBT.

Sources denied that the decision marked a sure change in Pakistan's public posture on the CTBT saying that this was what Pakistan Prime Minister Sharif promised to the world in his September address to the United Nations General Assembly.

Sharif had said that Pakistan was "...prepared to adhere to the CTBT before September 1999 Conference... However Pakistan's adherence to the Treaty was to take place only in conditions free from coercion or pressure."

This was the first public commitment Pakistan gave on the CTBT. Pakistani officials at that time justified it on the ground that it was consistent

with their position on the Treaty which was taken when it was being negotiated in Geneva.

During crucial negotiations on the text of the Treaty Pakistan did not side with India and Iran, the so called hold-out states, and later did not block consensus on the Treaty's text which it also approved in the United Nations General Assembly.

Sources say that no decision in this regard will be announced soon as Pakistan would be in a better position to finalise the date for signing of the CTBT around the middle of the year.

The ninth round of Talbott-Shamsad talks is also scheduled around that time.

Pakistan expects the US to take substantial steps to remove military sanctions in the meanwhile, but does not seem to be keen on linking up the CTBT signing with the lifting of the sanctions.

Only last week Pakistan's foreign minister Sartaj Aziz created a stir in Islamabad's diplomatic circles when he emphatically stated in the Senate that Islamabad's signing of the CTBT was subject to the removal of all sanctions.

## US energy team

From Page 1

tion Plan to implement the Joint Statement, and signing of several agreements involving the Energy Information Administration and the US Trade and Development Agency.

It is my conviction that Bangladesh's prospects in the next century are very bright indeed. Energy development can lead the way as the engine for national economic growth and prosperity that can benefit all Bangladeshis.

"It is my hope that through the visit of our delegation, we can make a meaningful contribution to this worthy cause," Humphrey said in his short statement.

Conveying warmest greetings of US Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson to the people of Bangladesh, Calvin Humphrey

noted that his mission was "important".

The US team will discuss with Bangladesh officials about private sector investment in gas and power sectors, legal aspects and transparency issues. "The consequent Action Plan will have certain points, which the government can take into consideration to implement," he said.

The Bangladesh government has expressed its commitment to the US government that it wants to develop the energy sector, he said. The US government is now reciprocating the signal.

After this mission defines areas of mutual co-operation, the DOE will send more delegations and a two-way relationship would continue, he said.

The US delegation includes Tom Cutler, Cynthia Lowry, Gordon Weyand, Dennis Zylnakis, Bob Middleton, Mary Ann Milosavich, Brian Castelli, Roger Taylor, John Herrman, Don Juckett, Russ Profolich, Donna Bobbish, and Mark Rodekhor.

Energy Secretary Dr Tawfik-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Director General for the Americas in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador SK Sharif Hassan and Additional Secretary of Energy Ministry Syed Tanveer Hussain were also present on the occasion.

## JSD to observe 'local govt day' today

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) will observe "Local Government Day" through out the country today demanding free, fair and neutral election and establishment of powerful self-regulatory local bodies, reports UNB.

## 251 shanties gutted in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Feb 6: At least 251 shanties were gutted in a fire that broke out at a slum adjacent to Jhauatala railway station under Pahartali thana here today, reports BSS.

Fire service and police sources said, the fire originated from an oven of a kitchen and soon engulfed the adjoining houses. Five firefighting units struggled worked for half an hour to extinguish the blaze.

## AL leaders

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"We decided yesterday to send district level leaders to different centres to hold rallies to pursue people that they should exercise the right to franchise, defying Opposition call to boycott the municipal elections," a Presidium member of the party told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

The AL high command has also asked district unit leaders to make sure that eventually only one candidate from the party contest for the post of chairman of a municipality.

The directive was issued as more than one AL candidate submitted nomination papers for the post of chairman in different municipalities, and in many cases, they did not withdraw their candidature.

The central leaders during their visits would also try to prevent one but all party candidates from contesting in a municipality, the sources said.

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## Abdullah

From Page 1

source said. The source had earlier said the king, dying from lymphatic cancer, had already been transferred.

The cabinet met after a source close to the royal family said relatives decided on Friday evening against turning off the life-support system that had sustained Hussein since he arrived back in the Jordanian capital earlier in the day.

"The constitution stipulates that when the king is in the country and unable to carry out his constitutional duties and responsibilities, then there are constitutional requirements and stipulations that empower the cabinet to appoint a regent," information minister Nasser Joudeh told reporters.

AP adds: After a day dominated by news of King Hussein's return home to die, Arab leaders and commentators shifted focus today to what fate awaits a Jordan after 46 years of the king's rule.

Some warned that succession may prove troublesome, while others questioned the wisdom of the monarch's policies and called for a change — and a turn away from the West.

Some Arab publications expressed doubts about whether Crown Prince Abdullah had what it takes to rule. One newspaper, Iraq's Babil, warned that Israel may take advantage of the king's illness to grab Jordanian territory.

"We hope that Jordan, under the new young leadership, reconsiders its policy in a revolutionary manner and comes back to the Arab fold," said Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi, himself in power for nearly 30 years.

"The policy of appeasing America by recognising the so-called Israel has proved its failure," said Gaddafi, one of several Arab leaders who have consistently criticised Hussein for his pro-Western policies and for signing a 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

Hostilities with Israel forged by the 63-year-old king have at times led to tensions with Arab heavyweights like Hafez Assad of Syria, Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

AFP says, Hosni Mubarak gave his full support today to Abdullah. Mubarak phoned Abdullah to express "his support to the leadership and the people of Jordan at this historic moment," reported Egyptian television, which interrupted its regular programming to make the announcement.

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Children take part in a painting competition to mark the Language Movement. The Bangla Academy organised the event yesterday ahead of the Ekushey February.

— Star photo

## Resist conspiracy to foil municipal polls: AL

Ruling Awami League yesterday called upon the people to resist the conspiracy being hatched by BNP-led opposition to foil the coming municipal elections, reports UNB.

"A spontaneous enthusiasm has been created among the people centring the municipal elections. But some opposition parties, led by BNP, were trying to create anarchy and terrorism to foil the polls aimed at to strengthen the local government bodies," said a meeting of the Central Coordination Committee of Awami League on Municipal Elections.

Awami League Presidium member and President of the Committee Amir Hossain Amu presided over the meeting held at the Awami Foundation in the afternoon.

In a resolution, the meeting welcomed the participation of a good number of leaders and workers of major political parties, including Awami League, BNP, Jatiya Party and 11-party alliance in the municipal elections.

It also called upon all democratic forces to make the polls a success for strengthening the democratic system and people's participation in the government.

The meeting also took a

## Tk 25 lakh gold seized at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

Customs authorities at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) recovered gold bars and ornaments worth about Tk 25 lakh from a Bangladeshi coming from Dubai in an Emirates flight yesterday.

Airport sources said the passenger went to the departure lounge on the first floor after the EK-612 flight landed at ZIA at about 9:30 am.

Customs personnel who were following him on suspicion since his arrival, challenged him there and recovered 41 gold bars, weighing ten tola each and 59 grams of gold ornaments from his pockets, the sources said.

A departmental case has been lodged in this connection.

## Guitarist gunned down in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Feb 6: Arif Raihan Pitu, 28, a guitarist, was gunned down by some unidentified assailants at about 7 pm on Friday at TB boundary road in the city.

The assailants fired at Pitu point blank and he died on the spot.

Police said, two youngmen, identified as Nobel Shaikh 26 and Chand Mia, 24, were arrested in this connection.

Police could not find out the reason behind the murder of the guitarist who was also a supporter of the ruling party.

Local people said that Pitu used to vehemently protest toll collection by a group of armed cadres of the ruling party in the area.

Pitu was murdered when top level leaders of district and city Awami League, including the State Minister for Disaster Management Talukder Abdul Khaleque, Whip Mostapha Rashidi Shuja and Sheikh Helaluddin MP were attending the extended committee meeting of the party to formulate a policy on non-interference in the police action against the wanted criminals and murderers of political leaders and activists.

However, no murder case was filed with the police till filing of this report.

## 5 alleged terrorists held with arms in Khagrachhari

KHAGRACHHARI, Feb 6: Security forces arrested five alleged terrorists along with firearms in the district's Panchhari thana on Friday and Saturday, reports APB.

Acting on a tip-off, army personnel arrested four tribal youths — Bjoy Chakma, Bilash Chakma, Shanti Chakma and Sudip Chakma — from near Nalkata bridge on Friday night and seized two country-made rifles and a knife from their possession.

On their confessional statements, security forces conducted another operation in Pungang area and arrested Debapriya Chakma along with two rifles.

The arrested tribal youths were handed over to local police.

A case was lodged in this connection.

## Ctg concert

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and around the stadium to maintain order were seen frequently chasing the unruly youths.

At one stage, one senior police official was forced to urge the audience over microphone from the dias to maintain order.

Scuffles among youngsters took place even in the VIP box, witnesses said.

However, the songs of band parties enthralled the audience irrespective of their sex and age, witnesses added.

## Gasfield

From Page 1

old. However, the wells have capacity up to 125 mmfd, he added.

Starting production in the Jalalabad Gasfield is being considered as the first success story for Occidental in Bangladesh since it signed two PSCs on January 11, 1995 — one for Block-12 another for the blocks 13 and 14 — covering most of the greater Sylhet region. A very small area was given to the Sylhet Gasfields Limited earlier.

The company suffered a severe setback following the blow out at the Magurchhara Gasfield in Moulibazar district during drilling in June, 1997. Later, the field was abandoned. However, the company has been preparing for drilling at a nearby location in the same structure, said an official.

The Occidental also drilled two other wells in the Bibiana structure in the Nabinjan thana under Habiganj district, where there is a 'very good reserve,' say the official survey reports.

## PM asks scouts to help country march forward

MAUCHACK (Gazipur), Feb 6: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today called for united efforts to remove obstacles to the country's development, reports UNB.

"We will have to go ahead removing hunger, malnutrition, ignorance and superstition which are hindering our progress," Hasina said while inaugurating the 6th National Scout Jamboree here this morning.

She urged the scouts to help the society by applying their personal skill, leadership, efficiency and knowledge.

"You are bold and indomitable, you are determined and you are the scouts. This is your only identity," she told the big gathering of the scouts.

More than 10,000 scouts from across the country joined the Jamboree this year. The scouts from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bhutan also take part in it.

Scouting also helps a child to be self confident, conscious and dedicated, and build up a worthy citizen, Hasina said assuring all possible help from

the government for flourishing the movement.

Mentioning the importance of the education, she asked the literacy from the country, as education is the only tool to free the nation from ignorance, malnutrition and superstitions.

Referring to the active participation and services rendered by the scouts during the 1998 floods, she said this was possible only for their determination, humanity and application of the practical knowledge.

She announced in the function that the government would introduce national award for the scouts in near future for their dedication and service to the nation.

The Prime Minister said scouting movement got dynamism during the post liberation period as per the directives of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The present government is willing to strengthen the movement and spread it in all educational institutions of the country, including all primary schools and Ebtadayee Madrasahs.

Jamboree Chief and Chief National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts Manjor Ul Karim and Jamboree Committee chairman, Abdul Kaum Thakur also addressed the function presided over Bangladesh Scouts President Mahbubuzzaman.

The Prime Minister inaugurated the colourful Jamboree releasing balloons and pigeons and inspected the parade of boys and girls scouts.

She handed over the best scout awards of the country, Silver Tiger, to Bruce Garmsey of Australia and Lolit Mohan Jain of India.

## City AL extended meet today

A special extended meeting of Dhaka City Awami League will be held in the party's central office at 23 Bangabandhu Avenue at 6 pm today, a party press release said.

## Rajuk

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now we are planning to file a case against Rajuk for violating court orders," Mahmudur Rahman, a local resident, told journalists.

The Supreme Court order on July 2 last year directed not to "disturb or destroy the greenery and the lake for the purpose of construction of any road or commercial plot on the lands or on the waters of Gulshan lake adjoining the plots of Gulshan lake and are further directed not to allot any such newly-created plot to anybody."

A resident of the lakeside area and former civil servant and minister AMA Muhit demanded that the earth filled in the Gulshan lake be removed and the lake restored to its original state. He said Rajuk was taking advantage of loopholes in the law.

"Filling of the lake will severely threaten the environment of the area," Muhit said.

Another resident slammed Rajuk for its statements that the lake filling was designed to build a dam to protect roads and houses during the flood. "It was totally a hoax," the resident said, calling it a Rajuk 'plot to create new plots for the black money holders'.

Representatives from environmental group Porosh, Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara Welfare Association, Baridhara Society, Banani Citizens' Welfare Society and Centre for Advanced Studies attended the press conference.

After the press conference, the residents of the area brought out a procession with banners, placards and festoons and paraded the area chanting slogans against the illegal activities of Rajuk.

## Larma: Talks tomorrow

From Page 1

ember 2, 1997, ending a decades-old insurgency in the CHT.

Some 2,000 PCJSS armed members belonging to its military wing Shantibahini laid their guns at a February 10 ceremony at Khagrachhari Stadium where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally received Shantu Larma's weapon, an AK-47 assault rifle.

But discord soon followed as Shantu Larma accused the government of breaching a number of pledges. One of his major grievances centred round the formation of the RC, designed to play a pivotal role in administering the region.

Shantu Larma, nominated by the government as chairman of the 22-member interim RC, was unhappy that the government did not accept three of his nominees from the Bengali community, which has six members on the council.

There had been several rounds of talks with the government to end the impasse, the last one held in November.

But Shantu Larma shunned a meeting with CHT affairs

minister Kalpanaraj Chakma at Khagrachhari last month, demanding an appointment with the Prime Minister.

The deadlock on full implementation of the CHT treaty is also impeding the functioning of the Land Commission, formed to survey and determine ownership of land in the hills, a bone of contention between the PCJSS and the settlers.

The PCJSS, who constitute roughly 48 percent of the nearly a million people living in the hills, also the home to 13 ethnic minorities including Chakmas, the dominant tribe to which Larma belongs.

PCJSS also demanded resettlement of the refugees, release of some of its party cadres, withdrawal of interim RC, camps, resettlement of Bengali and revision of the voters' list.

Our Khagrachhari correspondent adds: A delegation of the European Union will hold talks with PCJSS leaders on various CHT issues today.

Rupayan Dewan, a senior leader, stayed back to head the PCJSS delegation during the meeting with EU.