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Dhaka-Calcutta
trial bus
run Mar 23

CALCUTTA, Mar 20: As part of a dry-run between Dhaka and Calcutta, a bus from Bangladesh will arrive at Haridaspur on the Indo-Bangladesh border on March 23, reports PTI.

Managing Director, West Bengal Surface Transport Corporation Ltd (WBSTC), S Goswami today said the air-conditioned bus carrying some Bangladesh government officials will be received at Haridaspur of their Indian counterparts.

WBSTC will take newsmen to the spot to cover the historic event, Goswami said.

The state government is yet to announce the final date for the commercial run of the bus.

However, BSS quoting a Communication Ministry official in Dhaka today said the date of the trial bus run from Bangladesh is likely to be finalised tomorrow.

SAARC Summit
in third week of
Nov likely

The next SAARC summit is likely to be held in the third week of November as suggested by host country Nepal, reports UNB.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad told newsmen at the airport on his return from Colombo after attending the two-day SAARC foreign ministers' conference.

Replying to a query on Dhaka-Calcutta bus service, he said it would start very soon. The reason for delay in opening of trial bus service, earlier scheduled for March 18, was only procedural problem.

A new date would be set after discussion with the Economic Relations Division, he added.

Reacting to the comments of Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia on Dhaka-Calcutta bus service, Azad said, this was not proper on the part of the opposition leader. She opposed it only for opposition's sake.

She should be a responsible leader because she was Prime Minister of this country. She should understand the future of the new millennium, added the Foreign Minister.

Azad said: "When the whole world is moving fast with the concept of cooperation, how

See Page 12 Col 8

Cancel permission
for pvt terminal,
TUs tell minister

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of the 22 trade unions at Chittagong Port, during talks with the State Minister Shipping yesterday, reiterated their demand for cancellation of the government's permission to a US company to set up a container terminal at Patenga in the private sector.

State Minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya called the union leaders in Dhaka for talks in view of their call for a 4-hour strike at Chittagong port on March 23 to press cancellation of the permission, given to SSA (Bangladesh) Ltd. and some other demands.

The other demands include setting up of a container terminal at Newmooring in collaboration with a UK-based international consortium, Port Venture Limited (PVL) and the Singapore Port Authority, and introduction of incentive scheme for workers.

They had also warned of an indefinite strike.

Meeting sources said at 11pm that there were five hours' talks in two rounds, but no outcome.

See Page 12 Col 4

Inside Today

Article

Can Adminis-

trative Reform

Lead Good

Governance?

by Prof Rehman Sobhan

Page 4

Focus

Law and Our Rights

The last global peace initiative of the 20th century, and Law Watch

Page 5

Prayer Timings

March 21

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:30	5:35
Zohr	12:45	1:20
Asr	4:30	4:35
Maghrib	6:20	6:23
Esha	7:30	7:35

Source: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star



Bangladesh take
on Zimbabwe
today

Host Bangladesh will take on Zimbabwe in the third match of the three-nation Meril International Cricket tournament at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, reports UNB.

The 50-overs-a-side one-day international (ODI) match between two unequal rivals will start at 2 pm today.

Bangladesh Television (BTV) will telecast the match live while Bangladesh Betar will broadcast running commentary.

Zimbabwe skipper Alistair Tikolo told newsmen yesterday they are confident of winning the match (with Bangladesh). "We would like to win the trophy winning all the matches," he said.

Bangladesh captain Aminul Islam Bulbul said "we will always try our best and play a positive game."

Today's encounter will be the third ODI match between the two teams since Bangladesh earned the one-day status in June 1997.

Earlier, Zimbabwe met ICC champions Bangladesh twice in tri-nation cricket tournament involving Zimbabwe, Bangladesh and Kenya in Nairobi in October 1997 and won on both occasions.

Khaleda says
AL MPs' houses
now safe haven
for criminals

SATKHIRA, Mar 20: BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia today blamed the government for the worsening law and order situation in the country, saying "it is giving shelter to criminals and terrorists," reports UNB.

"Residencies of ruling party MPs have become safe shelters for terrorists and criminals," she said addressing a public meeting at Satkhira Government Boys High School grounds in the afternoon.

Khaleda said the world community has also come to know of the "terrorist activities being carried out with the patronage of the ruling party."

Referring to the recent killings in Kushtia and Jessor, the former Prime Minister held the ruling party responsible for the brutal incidents. "The government is trying to conceal the truth by arresting innocent activists of the opposition and Islamic forces," she said.

She said democracy, sovereignty and independence of the country are not safe in the hands of this government.

The opposition leader said this government should not be

See Page 12 Col 4

Payment of bills for gas from 2 foreign cos Petrobangla faces loss of \$2-3 lakh a month

By Sharier Khan

Petrobangla is finally going to pay for gas developed and supplied by foreign companies from its funds, sources said.

The finance ministry had earlier informed Petrobangla that it would not continue paying the bills from the beginning as per the gas purchase-sale agreement.

Petrobangla is now diverting funds from its profit-making concerns to pay for the expensive Sangu gas and relatively less expensive Jalalabad gas.

Till last month, the ministry paid around 2.5 million dollars a month for Sangu gas. The bills will increase sharply from next month as US company Occidental has already started supplying 100 mmcfd of gas.

However, Petrobangla sources said that it could not be determined whether the expensive gas supplied by foreign companies was being utilised properly.

The power sector is a major consumer of gas. We've heard a lot of complaints in the past that the power units were not getting adequate gas. But now gas supply has reached an optimum level and we don't see any visible impact of increased gas supply to the power sector," one source noted.

The country's gas production, including Cairn and Occidental's supplies, has now reached a total of over 900 mmcfd. However, some of the local gasfields such as Kallastila has cut down production to accommodate Cairn and

See Page 12 Col 3

Term of govt should be reduced by half

FBCCI chief's quest for stability

By Staff Correspondent

FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo feels that reducing of the present five year term of a government to two and half years would help ensure political stability in the country.

"Given the political parties' present level of intolerance for each other, general elections should be held every two and half years," the chief of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries said. "Such a provision, an interim arrangement for the next four/five governments, will definitely help establish political stability in the country."

Mintoo made the observation while presiding over a FIMA-sponsored 'Discussion Meeting on Electoral Law Reforms with Business Leaders' in the city yesterday.

He also said that the women

See Page 12 Col 3

Another failed attempt to boost shrimp industry

By A K M Mohsin

Just another failed attempt to boost a thriving industry?

To help shrimp growers in the southern districts, a private operator chartered a small plane to ferry fries from Cox's Bazar. But the aviation regulators spoiled the move, despite strong personal interest from the minister concerned.

It takes as long as 24 to 28 hours by truck from Cox's Bazar to Khulna region. The long trip kills some 20 to 30 per cent of the baby shrimps, each costing Tk 1.30.

So, the southern growers needed something faster and viable. International Project Support Services Ltd (IPSSL) came forward with a Russian-built AN-26 aircraft which arrived yesterday morning.

By plane, the mortality rate is at highest one per cent in a one-hour flight.

Hatchery officials in Cox's Bazar said trucked deliveries result not only in high mortality.

Fisheries Minister ASMA Rab was already at the Dhaka

See Page 12 Col 4

15 recommendations for effective parliament, good governance

By Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a regional seminar yesterday suggested that an effective Parliament and a transparent government could help establish good governance in South Asian countries.

They also identified the colonial bureaucracy as the major barrier to making the Parliament effective which was needed for a transparent government system.

The seminar on "Parliament and Good Governance: Towards a New Agenda for Strengthening Accountability in South Asia" was held at the BRAC centre in Rajendrapur, Gazipur. MPs, academics, researchers, economists and social workers from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and host Bangladesh are participating in the five-day seminar.

On the opening day yesterday, the seminar was attended by three MPs each from Pakistan and Bangladesh and four from Nepal but there was no MP from India and Sri Lanka. The two countries represented by their researchers and economists. Besides, representatives of Transparency International from its Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal chapters, Canada-based Parliamentary Centre, the World Bank, the CIDA and the National Democ-

PM opens gas processing plant today

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Mar 20: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate a gas processing plant installed near the Jalalabad Gasfield in the suburb of Sylhet town tomorrow, according to district administration sources.

She will also visit a production well in the gasfield.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to reach MAG Osmani International Airport at 10 am where from she will drive to the shrines of Hazrat Shahjalal (RA) and that of Hazrat Shah Paran (RA).

She will inaugurate the plant at 11:30 am and will leave for the capital at 1:20 pm, the source added.

The plant will process 100

See Page 12 Col 1

Shafi Sami new Foreign Secy

C M Shafi Sami has been appointed Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, said an official announcement yesterday, reports UNB.

Sami succeeds Mustafizur Rahman who held the post till his death on February 28.

Prior to his new assignment, Sami was the Bangladesh High Commissioner to India.

He joined the civil service in 1966 and has served with distinction at home and abroad. His diplomatic assignments included High Commissioner to Pakistan and ambassador to Saudi Arabia and China.

He was the chief coordinator of the first SAARC Summit held in Dhaka in 1985.

Shafi Sami in action on way to his career best 95, the highest score by a Bangladeshi in one-day international.

— Star photo by AKM Mohsin



Man of the Match
Steve Tikolo of Zimbabwe

Kenya humble Bangladesh

By Al-Amin and Syed Ashfaqul Haque

Kenya outclassed Bangladesh at their own den yesterday.

The African lions gave the over-rated Bangladesh boys a true cricketing lesson at the Bangabandhu National Stadium when they slapped the hosts with an eight-wicket defeat.

Steve Tikolo and Maurice Odumbe showed the hosts how to bat supreme while their bowlers taught their opponents how to maintain a tight line and length in a limited-overs match. The day-night match was the second of the tri-national Meril International tournament.

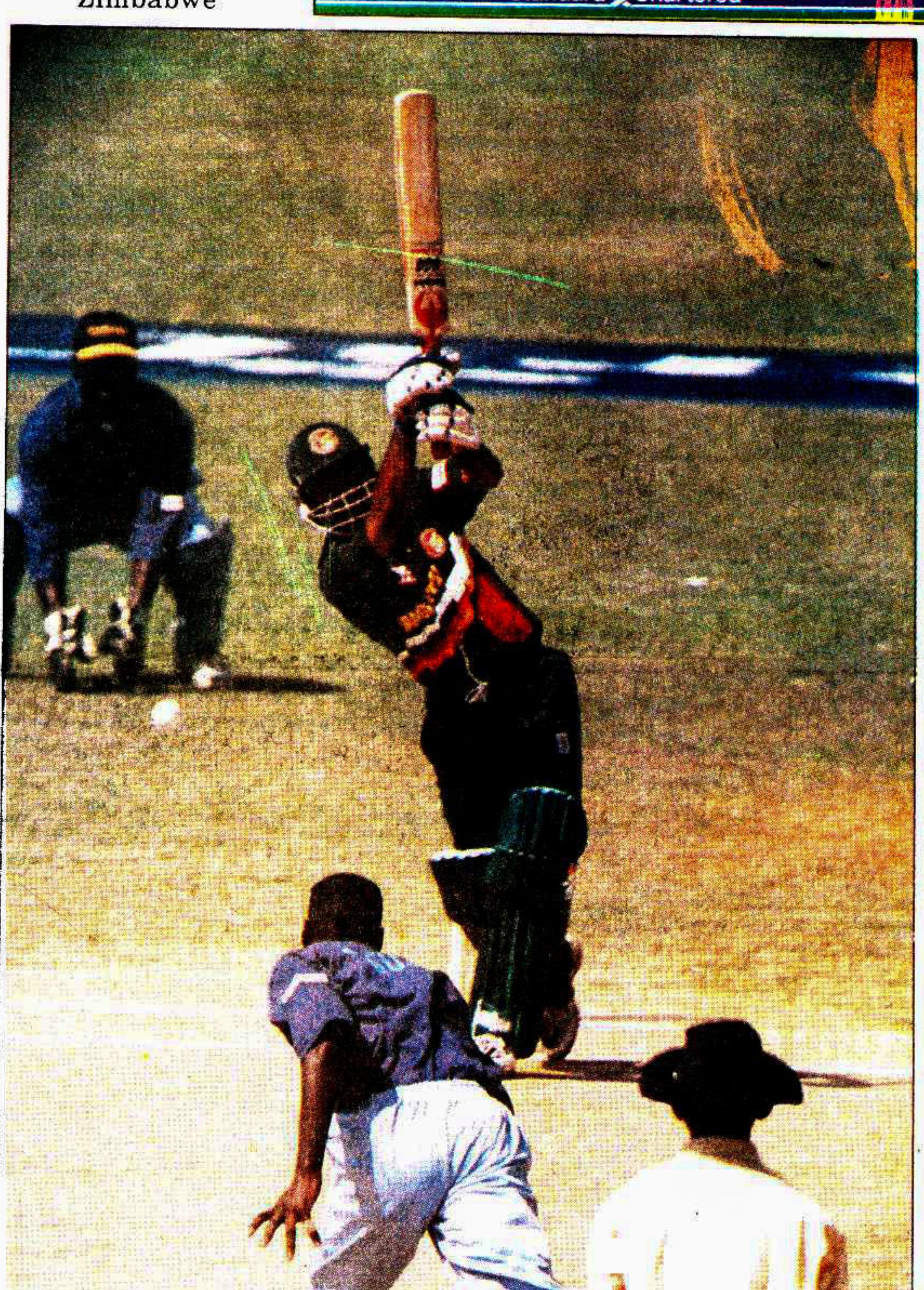
The two class players got their act together to produce 118 runs for the undefeated third wicket as Kenya, chasing a modest Bangladesh total of 213, reached 215 for two in only 43.5 overs.

Tikolo scored an unbeaten 106, his maiden hundred in one-day cricket, and Odumbe remained not out on a run-ball 58 to give the Kenyans their fourth win in five meetings against Bangladesh after both were awarded the ODI status in 1997.

See Page 12 Col 1

we score...
while others watch

Standard Chartered



Shafi Sami in action on way to his career best 95, the highest score by a Bangladeshi in one-day international.

— Star photo by AKM Mohsin

Nasim refutes BBC report on police rape of British woman

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Mar 20: The plan for demolition of the worn-out Chittagong court building and construction of a new structure has been shelved for long