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Khaleda, Ershad call on Li

Opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called on the visiting Chinese leader Li Peng at his hotel suit, reports UNB.

During the 30-minute meeting they discussed various aspects of bilateral relations and political situation in South Asia.

Begum Zia thanked the Chinese leader for extending cooperation in constructing international conference centre in Dhaka.

Recalling the cordial relation developed between the two countries when Begum Zia was Prime Minister, Li Peng said China always extended cooperation and will continue in future.

Begum Zia said the foundation of friendly relation with Bangladesh, especially in defence, was established during the tenure of President Ziaur Rahman.

She expressed her commitment to continue friendship with China and the Chinese National People's Congress as well.

Referring to the testing of nuclear bombs by India last year, BNP Chairperson expressed concern that it would cause instability in the region and anxiety among the people.

Begum Zia also informed the Chinese leader about the country's current political and economic situation.

APB says, Chairman of Jatiya Party and former President Hussain Muhammad Ershad also made a courtesy call on Li Peng yesterday.

At the meeting the Chinese leader recalled his previous visit here during the tenure of Ershad as President.

They also discussed various socio-economic issues.

Li leaves

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The Chinese dignitary said his current trip would promote friendship and understanding between our two friendly countries.

Li, who is the second in the Chinese Communist Party hierarchy, was Prime Minister twice. He visited Bangladesh earlier in 1989 and also received Sheikh Hasina when she visited China in September, 1996.

UNB adds: Li Peng, during a courtesy call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday, assured continued assistance and cooperation for the economic development of Bangladesh.

He appreciated Bangladesh's stand on "One China" policy and peaceful reunification of Taiwan.

"As neighbours Bangladesh and China have excellent cordial relations which would be strengthened in future," he said.

Welcoming him and his delegation members, President Shahabuddin said, "Bangladesh will continue to work with China in the international arena." He reiterated Bangladesh's support to China on the Taiwan question.

He said Bangladesh considers China as her development partner.

Arms theft

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The CMM's court, were closed this afternoon.

A five-member inquiry committee headed by DC (South) was also formed. The committee has been asked to submit its report by April 20. A gun and a rifle were stolen from the Malkhana of Khulna Metropolitan Police. The theft was detected during rechecking of alamats in the Malkhana on April 6.

Land for Meghnaghat plant Accord signed before ministry's clearance

Star Report

The Power Development Board (PDB) has signed a contract on Meghnaghat Power Plant Land Development Project with Chinese firm CWHEC two days before the Energy Ministry gave clearance for this project.

According to official documents, the PDB had signed the agreement on March 14 while the ministry's clearance was issued on March 16 and it reached PDB one week later.

Under the 140 crore taka project, 100 hectares of land will be developed for setting up the Meghnaghat Power Plant.

Sources said that this was apparently done to avoid a High Court ruling on the project. The court had imposed an injunction on the project on March 16 on the ground that one of the bidders was not treated fairly by the PDB.

An official of the Meghnaghat Power Project when contacted yesterday evening said that he could not remember when the agreement on the Land Development Project was signed with CWHEC. But work on the project is now going on smoothly, he said.

A private land developer company had earlier filed a writ petition with the High Court against the Power Development Board (PDB) alleging irregularities in tender bidding for the project.

Classic-Dragodis JV, a Swiss-Bangladesh joint venture, which had participated in the re-tender for the project late last year, charged the PDB, its Secretary and the Secretary for Power on February 22 with unfair treatment in the bidding.

Sources said that during hearing of the case on March 25, lawyers of Classic-Dragodis brought to the attention of the court that PDB had signed an agreement with CWHEC for the project on March 14, two days before the Energy Ministry okayed selection of CWHEC as the lowest bidder and one week before PDB received the Ministry clearance.

Hearing of the case resumed Sunday. PDB had floated tender for the project twice. The first one was cancelled on the ground that there was "lack of participation".

The second tender was floated in August last year. The process was delayed this time.

Rubel murder

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Ten of the fourteen chargesheeted accused, including AC Akram Hossain, eight other DB personnel and Mukuli Begum were produced before the court at about 11 am yesterday.

The CID submitted the charge sheet of Rubel murder case accusing AC Akram, twelve other policemen and Mukuli Begum on September 24 last year before the CMM's court.

Ten accused in the case are detained at the Dhaka Central Jail while four other DB personnel are absconding.

During yesterday's proceedings, separate bail petitions were moved on behalf of Mukuli Begum, Inspector Aminul Islam, SI Amir Ahmed, Tareque and Habilder Nuruzzaman.

Besides, the defence lawyers prayed for relieving the accused from the charges brought against them while the public prosecutor opposed the defence lawyers.

The Judge, Molla Mustafa Kamal rejected the bail prayers.

Land for Meghnaghat plant

also as two of the bidders claimed to be the lowest bidder. The bidders also complained that the authorities were favouring CWHEC.

The Cabinet then pulled the curtain by asking the authorities to sign contract with CWHEC in early March.

Classic-Dragodis had participated in both the bids. In the second bid, it had submitted the bid bond one day after the bid-closing. PDB said that the bid bond was not in conformity with the terms of the re-tender.

In its writ petition, Classic-Dragodis claimed that bids of the other bidders also did not conform to the terms of the re-tender. Yet PDB accepted their proposals. It claimed that it was not treated in the way other bidders were treated.

The delay in signing and implementation of the land development project has already pushed the 450 MW power scheme one year behind schedule. PDB has initiated a power purchase agreement with US company AES which would build, own and operate the power plant.

Meanwhile, the BNP secretary general in a statement strongly condemned the attack on the residence of party MP Fazlul Azim.

Theft in Dhaka Bar Assoc office

By Staff Correspondent

About Tk 1.3 lakh and some documents relating to the Dhaka Bar Association building were stolen from its office at Court House Street under Kotwali thana in the city yesterday.

Police so far arrested six people for their alleged involvement in the incident.

Chhatak blast

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Sunamganj Sadar Hospital who performed the post-mortem on the bodies of two young man killed in the blast, sources informed tonight. The CID officials, also took written statements from some of the officials.

Meanwhile, the case filed by the officer-in-charge of Chhatak thana regarding the blast was also transferred to the CID yesterday, the sources added. ASP Aminul Islam of Comilla zone of CID, who is also in charge of Sylhet zone and the investigating officer of this case too, the source added.

The OC, Chhatak lodged another case after explosive experts of Army recovered huge live and inoperative bombs, bomb-making materials from the MP's house. Both the cases will be investigated by the CID simultaneously.

MCCI leaders call on US envoy

Leaders of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) yesterday met US Ambassador John C Holzman at the US Embassy in the city and discussed developments in the business sector, reports UNB.

The meeting with the US ambassador came on the heels of the MCCI's parleys with the ambassadors of European Union countries Sunday on confrontational politics and worsening law and order.

The business leaders who met Holzman were MCCI president Mahubur Jamil, former presidents Latifur Rahman and Mahubur Rahman.

BNP: Power

From page 1

gle problem of the people as it is totally incompetent," he said, and added that the government's corruption, looting, failure, wrong policy, politicisation and incompetence have pushed the country on the verge of destruction.

Addressing a coordination meeting of BNP and its front organisations at the party central office, he said the government which cannot ensure electricity and water has no right to stay in power any more.

He alleged that the government is blatantly trying to impose its failures on the shoulder of the opposition. He said this time the government would not be able to foil any future movements and hatch conspiracies "as people from all walks of life have already taken to the streets and are joining with our movement."

Bhuiyan urged the party leaders and the people to make the nationwide "Demonstration Day" on April 15, torch procession on April 17 and dawn-to-dusk hartal of April 18, a success.

Meanwhile, the BNP secretary general in a statement strongly condemned the attack on the residence of party MP Fazlul Azim.

Probe report

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will arrest the AC only when we have more concrete evidence against him," said an official.

It is quite surprising that the AC in charge was not informed about the activities of his team members. If he really did not know anything, it was his inefficiency," the official said referring to Kabir's statements that he did not know anything about Shafi murder.

CID sources said last night that the investigators received information that the DB team had gained money illegally after recovering smuggled heroin worth about Tk 2.5 crore from the city's Demra area in February. "We have come to the conclusion that Inspector Zia knew Shafi and he was used in many cases," one source said.

Inspector Zia was placed on a fresh remand of four days by the CMM's court yesterday. CID officials said that they were almost certain that he was involved in the murder.

Three others arrested in connection with the murder -- SI Shajahan, habilder Bellal and constable Rob-- will be produced before the CMM's court today after a five-day remand. CID would seek further remand.

Shazneen

From page 1

ings, the judge, Tapan Kumar Rudra, asked the six accused whether they were guilty. All the six standing in the dock pleaded that they were innocent.

The court framed charges against Shahid under Section 6(2) of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 1995 and against five others under Section 6(2) and Section 14 of the same Act.

The court fixed May 11 for deposition of informant's statement.

Besides, lawyers of the maids Parveen and Minu, Mosharraf Hossain Kajol, filed a petition for discharging the two from charges brought against them.

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Advertisement for Philips products. "Ideal gift for any occasion." "Instalment facility available only for purchases above Tk. 7,500." "Transcom Electronics Limited Official licensee of Philips Electronics N.V. for lighting products, radio and TV sets." Includes images of a Hair Dryer and Cordless Kettle.

Minister tells press on return from Delhi Bangladesh received more water than it was ensured in accord

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak yesterday said Bangladesh will try to finalise the water sharing of the Teesta river with India during the next JRC meeting to be held in Dhaka, reports UNB.

Addressing a press conference after returning from the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) meeting in New Delhi, he said that during the meeting, the Commission stressed urgent need for sharing of the Teesta waters.

"The JRC directed the Joint Committee of Experts headed by the Water Resources Secretaries (of the two countries) to submit a report at the next meeting in this regard," he added.

The experts committee is likely to meet in July, he added. The minister said the JRC meeting expressed satisfaction over the flow of Ganges water through Farakka barrage to Bangladesh.

Ctg accidents

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other truck. The truck hit an autorickshaw and skidded into a roadside ditch.

The autorickshaw driver and five of the same family died on the spot.

Nine others -- who were returning to Mirersharai from Chittagong town on board the loaded truck were crushed under the goods and the vehicle, police added.

Later, hundreds of people from surrounding areas rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies, aided by police.

Following the accident, traffic movement on the road remained suspended till this morning. Several hundred vehicles got stranded, witnesses added.

Earlier, three persons including the driver of an autorickshaw died in an accident on Kaptai road at Mariamnagar under Rangunia thana at around 8 pm last night.

The autorickshaw was hit by a truck coming from the opposite direction, police said.

Showcause

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The writ petition submitted, "The right of political parties, if any, to hold demonstration or to protest against government activities, cannot extend to preventing the citizens of the country from exercising their fundamental rights of attending their business, their studies and their avocation and in such a context the calling, and holding of hartal ought to be declared illegal."

The petition also submitted, "During the observance of hartal the police force does not take any step to prevent violence and to prevent coercion. So, whenever a hartal is called, a citizen, out of fear for his life and property is forced to remain indoors."

The April 18 countrywide hartal has been called by the BNP-led opposition alliance protesting deteriorating law and order and power and water crises.

Buriganga

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Shi'te Masjid at Mohammadpur to Killar More at Lalbagh and Mitford on the river front. When it is completed, we'll take on the encroachers to clear the river," the minister said.

Steps are also being taken up to clear the Shitalakhya, the Surma, the Bhairab and the Betna rivers, he said. He also urged journalists to help create a strong public opinion to save the rivers from encroachers.

AJM clashes

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One Badsha Miah, 35, a worker of Mill No-2 was shot dead on the spot when he was caught in a crossfire. Badsha, who hailed from Matlab of Chandpur district, was returning home from duty.

The clash spread over Dhaka-Baju, New Colony area, Shapla Chatter, Natun Gate and Teddi Gate area and sounds of sporadic gun shots were heard from different parts of the mills.

According to witnesses, several hundred rounds of gun shots were fired and a huge number of home-made bombs were hurled in the 10-hour-long gunbattle.

Police fired seven rounds of rubber bullets to disperse the warring factions.

Huge contingent of police and paramilitary BDR personnel were deployed in the area to avert any further clash.

The body of the deceased Badsha Miah was sent to Narayanjan sadar hospital for autopsy from where it will be sent to his village home for burial.

Tension mounted in and around the mill area following the clash. Some workers have already left the area apprehending fresh violence.

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report at 9:00 p.m. today.

Advertisement for JUB (Jama'at-ul-Jama'at) featuring a large image of a woman in a sari. Text includes "স্বাগতম বাংলা-১৪০৬", "আমাদের সম্মানিত গ্রাহকও গুণাবলীস্বীকারে জাবাই", "বরবর্ষের গুণেচ্ছা". Includes JUB logo and contact information: "TEL # 955-3338, 956-0027-30, 956-0038 Tk # 575840 JBD BU 671288 JBHO BU FAX # 880-2-9564644".

Large advertisement for "The President" cigarettes. "TURN TO BLACK" "SO CHANGE OVER TO NATIONAL BRAND FOR PERFECT PLEASURE AND SATISFACTION". "The President FILTER KINGS". Includes image of a car and a pack of cigarettes.