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19 Chinese

nationals

deported

The government deported 19
Chinese nationals yesterday, five days after they had arrived here from Hong Kong, officials said, reports BSS.

on arrival at the Zia Interna-

tional Airport as they failed to

explain their purpose of visit-ing Bangladesh. They were in-

terrogated by different agencies.
Immigration officials said

the Chinese were sent back by a Biman Bangladesh Airlines

Immigration officials, quoting the Chinese embassy officials, said the Chinese mission

Crash programme

From Page 1

lower priced Independent Pri-

vate Power (IPP) projects at risk

of not getting financing from

also reminded the Secretary

Bangladesh government's

commitment to the Donors at

meet, the Government of

Bangladesh pledged that all fu-

ture IPPs would be implemented

through a transparent bidding

process and other prudent crite-

ria, including (a) least cost gen-

eration plan. (b) international

competitive bidding, (c) finan-cial burden on GOB/PDB, bal-

ance of payments and foreign

exchange reserves of the

Bangladesh Bank," the source

from the donors and cautious

criticism from the government's own power experts, the

higher authorities are pushing

ahead with the crash pro-

power tariff under this pro-

gramme would be 4.5 US cents

per unit. "In contrast, the

Meghnaghat and Haripur pro-

jects with a total capacity of 810

MW -- which are now in a stag-

nant state due to lack of gov-

ernment drive-- offer 2.79 cents

and 2.72 cents respectively." the

mensingh power plant project. initiated in 1994 under the Ru-

ral Power Company (RPC), re-

mains shelved since August

last when a barge carrying the

generators of the plant got stuck

up in a shoal near Mymensingh.

Instead of salvaging that barge,

the government recently asked

RPC to go for second phase of

the plant with the same

contractor at about the same

that the cost of the second phase

should be much less than that

of the first phase and that the

first phase needed to be com-

pleted first, the authorities are

Although experts pointed out

cost as that of the first phase.

Meanwhile, the 60 MW My-

source pointed out.

It has been decided that

gramme.

Despite negative signals

"At the Paris Consortium

the Paris Consortium meeting.

The banks' representatives

lenders," one source said.

was not aware of their tour.

The Chinese were detained

Down to Earth The Tragedy of a Dying River

A river's contribution to the making of a city beautiful is great on account of its environmental impact. This was the case in respect of Buriganga in the recent past when the river used to be Dhaka City's window for fresh air and water front for

pleasant promenading. The mighty river was once the pride and joy of the inhabitants of the city. A trip on the river or to merely sit along its banks was a delight. No more, for it's now a heavily polluted and pitiable stream — a stink-ing nightmare — because it has hardly any strength left in the currents to wash out the loads of industrial and domestic wastes as well as the river traffic out-pourings on its body away into the stronger currents of the confluence of rivers that it joins downstream.

It is well-established how the river came to such a sorry pass. The present level of dissolved oxygen in Buriganga water is much less than the minimum dissolved oxygen level required for healthy aquatic life. An estimated 450,000 cubic

metres of waste liquid per day pours into Buriganga from three source points alone, namely the Hazaribagh tanneries, the Dholaikhal and the Pagla Sewage Treatment Plant.

The inflow at these points consume 40 tons of dissolved oxygen from the natural flow of the river. Add to these other discharges from installations directly encroaching on the river. The Department of Environment has reportedly identi-

general Abdul Mannan

at 29 Minto Road, the official

residence of the Leader of the

Opposition in Parliament, in

the evening he said the opposi-

tion parties had announced

their road marches on May 3

and repeatedly said that the

programme will be "very" peace-

fear as a lame excuse, Bhuiyan

said. "There is no scope of the

government to prohibit us un-

der any law of the country.

There is no such law in the

country to impose ban on the

march. Even the government

cannot obstruct us by imposing

Section 144 because all the ve-

hicles of the road march will

programme. Begum Zia will ad-

dress a public gathering at

Alenga under Tangail, on the

eastern side of the bridge and

another rally at Kadda in Siraj-

ganj on the western side. Both

Two shot dead

in Banskhali

a clash between two rival

As per our earlier announced

Terming the government's

ful and disciplined.

pass normally.

Addressing a press briefing

Bhuivan.

fied a total of 113 encroachments polluting the river, including households, factories, dockyards, vegetable markets,

tion which threatens public

dimension of the problem connected with Buriganga river. In gross violation of the rules. many builders have encroached on the river banks and extended their structures right into the river waters, obstructing the free flow of water and destroying the beauty of the river front. Encroachments on the banks of continuing for quite sometime but no action had been taken

The illegal constructions and encroachments along the southern bank of the river have begun to affect the navigation and free flow of water. In order to clear the river bank of all unauthorised structures and prevent encroachment, the

Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) has prepared a Tk 16.5 crore project which will hopefully be implemented from July this year after formal approval from the ministry con-

The BWDB has selected for the project a four-kilometre stretch of the river's southern bank from the China-Bangladesh Friendship Bridge to the west.

While the authorities are fighting a losing battle against pollution, the structures threatening the free flow of river wa-ter compounds the problem caused by the industrial effluents and organic waste.

Most encroachments on the northern bank of the river were removed when the Dhaka Flood Protection Project was taken up. The phenomenon of coming-up of illegal structures on government land on the river banks in violation of rules is a matter which deserves serious attention and a long-term solu-

Some keen observers have suggested formation of a supervisory body for the revival of the dying Buriganga. In this context, a possible step that might be readily taken is the setting up of a Buriganga Authority' to regulate traffic as well as industrial, commercial and domestic encroachments on the river, while the three major sources of pollution could either be removed or taken care of by recycling or remedial technology.



was taken from Greenway, Maghbazar. - Star photo

More rains

By Special Correspondent

The rainfall was recorded at 141 mm.

Elsewhere, dark clouds bursting in a pre-monsoon spell, washed the drought

reported virtually from all over the country barring Teknaf. Cox's Bazar and Kutubdia island.

said the rains were an "extension of Thursday's system" that started with intermittent rains on Wednesday. More rains are expected today and tomorrow.

this year despite the prolonged

Sweeper did it?

By Staff Correspondent ban may have damaged the chair meant for the President and another chair for guests at the Darbar Hall Monday morning using sharp weapons that was found at the presidential palace, said a police official

visited the spot and launched an investigation into the incident after a Bangabhaban official filed a general diary with Motijheel thana in this regard

them at the presidential palace.

Second phase of Nepalese polls

Reuters.

Duma vote on Yeltsin's impeachment today An impeachment vote is

MOSCOW. May 14: Angry lawmakers argued and shouted today over impeaching Boris Yeltsin after the Kremlin warned that any move to remove the president will be a declaration of war and plunge Russia into crisis, reports AP.

Kremlin officials made the stark warnings as the lower chamber of parliament, the Duma, began a second day of hearings on five charges. Lawmakers blasted each other with passionate speeches, for and against impeachment, as opposition leaders predicted at least one charge will be approved.

Impeaching Yeltsin 'will seriously aggravate the political situation and be a declaration of war, a senior Kremalin officials was quoted as saying by the ITAR-Tass news agency.

"The president's decisions may be most unexpected." the officials said in an apparent warning that the Duma will be dissolved if it backs impeach-

Nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky, whose party backs Yeltsin, repeatedly lost his temper, shouting at lawmakers that the president must not be impeached because NA-TO's air strikes against Yugoslavia are also a threat to Russia.

"We have an external enemy. They will destroy us. They're bombing Yugoslavia ... so they can later bomb ... Moscow," he shouted, slamming his fist on the podium. Communist lawmakers hit

back with emotional appeals to oust Yeltsin. Hard-liner Sergei Baburin accused the president of being "interested only in power, not the interests of the But liberal deputies also at-

tacked the president, with lawmaker Vladimir Lysenko accusing Yeltsin of betraying democracy and urging him to resign. "Boris Nikolayevich, you

have to decide. Tomorrow might be two late, Lysenko Pro-Kremlin lawmakers said the hearings were a trav-

esty of justice. "We will not allow ... a political mob trial," said Vladimir Ryzhkov. Lawmakers heard today from five witnesses, who spoke

mainly on legal aspects of impeachment. But 25 other wit-

nesses, including former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. failed to show up. Most of the missing witnesses reportedly oppose impeachment and the Duma cannot compel atten-

SYLHET, May 14: Four peo-

ple were killed and 60 others in-

jured in separate road accidents

on the Sylhet-Dhaka and Syl-

het-Sunamganj highways on

mitted to Sylhet Osmani Medi-

cal College Hospital (SOMCH)

sources said a collision be-

tween a coach and a truck at

Kamaichhara on the Dhaka-

Sylhet highway left one person

dead on the spot and 25 injured

Of the injured, 35 were ad-

Police and Fire Brigade

Thursday, reports APB.

and different clinics.

scheduled for tomorrow. The charges against Yeltsin

are: destroying the Soviet Union, selling out Russia to the West, starting war in the breakaway region of Chechnya, illegally dissolving parliament in 1993, and waging genocide against the Russian nation with policies that wrecked the economy and health care system and sent life expectancy plung-

Yeltsin's sacking of the government of Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov on Wednesday gave fresh impetus to the impeachment effort, led by Communists and other hardliners.

But a Duma vote for impeachment is just the first step and the odds are still in the president's favour. To remove Yeltsin from office, impeachment must be approved by twothird majorities of the supreme and constitutional courts and the upper chamber of parlia-

Deputies yesterday heard reports on the five counts against Yeltsin, including allegations that his policies had cost the lives of millions of Russians by wrecking the economy and the social welfare system.

From Page 1

now processing the formalities for the second phase. The Energy Ministry held a series of meetings with different private sector power com-Sonali Bank

panies last week and asked them to fill up a single-page form to begin the unsolicited negotiations. Besides, the ministry is also going to negotiate with a Chi-

nese firm for setting up a 210 MW power plant on supplier's credit, which is normally discouraged due to high rate of interest on it.

Nasım From Page 1

area is a restricted zone.

Assembly, rally, meeting or any other political programme on the Bridge or in its surrounding area are not desirable, he

Nasim said he had telephone conversations with BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuyian, MP, and BNP leader Morshed Khan, MP, and requested them to find out an alternative route.

The home minister assured them that the government would do everything possible to ensure smooth observance of the programme.

"Although it is an anti-government programme, we will take allout measure for smooth conclusion of the programme."

Nasim said he had already requested the state minister for shipping to arrange special fer-

ries at Aricha-Nagarbari route for the road marchers. To a question, the home minister said BNP leaders re-

quested him to withdraw the restriction and assured him of maintaining peace and discipline while crossing the bridge. Nasim told the opposition

leaders that despite their good intentions, some people might create a law and order situation at the key point installation.

In recent times, law and order situation was created in different political programmes,

he reminded the BNP leaders. He said even on the day the Bangabandhu Bridge was inaugurated last year. Awami League organised its meeting outside

the restricted area. The ban was imposed "in

public interest" including the safety and security of the structure and its surrounding areas, Nasim said. "Adequate number of ferries

will be arranged at the Aricha-Nagarbari Ghat," he said and hoped the opposition party would understand the situation, considering the security of the bridge as well as public inter-

Pak FM sees gains from its N-tests

SINGAPORE, May 14: Pakistan's foreign minister said today that the diplomatic and security gains from its nuclear tests had been worth the economic price, reports Reuters. Almost one year after Pak-

istan detonated five nuclear devices, sparking widespread international sanctions, Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz told Reuters the country had started to return to normal He said that although the

country had faced a difficult year in 1998, the gradual lifting of some sanctions in January had eased the situation.

When asked in hindsight whether Pakistan still needed to test weapons in May regardless of the cost, the foreign min-

lided at Nadampur

wounds when two coaches col-

Talks on road march fails

From Page 1 BNP yesterday decided to

take a tough stance if the government obstructs the Dhaka-Panchagarh road march and does not withdraw the ban on crossing the Jamuna Bridge. Party chief Begum Zia held a series of meetings with party

stalwarts for more than six hours from 5:30 pm yesterday and discussed the next course of action following the government move, party sources said. Begum Zia will hold a press

conference at her Minto Road official residence at 5:30 pm to-

"All of our programmes so far were peaceful and non-violent. We have avoided all sorts of confrontation although there were provocations every time from the government side during the last three years. But this time we have no alternative but to take a tough stance against the government," said a top BNP leader.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, the leader said BNP showed utmost tolerance during its CHT Long March despite serious provocation and obstruction by ruling Awami League. The leader said ruling party

cade at Kanchpur to obstruct the CHT Long March. Tens of thousands of marchers led by Begum Khaleda Zia were stranded there for about ten hours, but none violated discipline or did any violence.

road march programme at any cost. We are determined to go ahead with our planned march any how," said BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

"We must go to Panchagarh through the Jamuna Bridge. We will face if the government obstruct us. What can we do if the government itself invites its own fall," said BNP Standing Committee member Moudud Ahmed, emerging from the meeting with Begum Zia.

a one-point oust-government movement from the spot where we will be obstructed. We may announce programmes to paralyse the country through creating deadlock in the port city and in road communications to and from the capital."

party also discussed calling of non-stop hartal, gherao of the Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Office. "Any body can be violent if someone repeatedly disrupts his or her peace. The government is repeatedly obstructing us from implementing our peaceful programmes," he

BNP leader Anwar Zahiz, who represents the party in the Liaison Committee, said that the committee would meet today at 11 am at the official resi dence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and fix the next course of action. "Today we have decided to

discuss future course of action with policymakers of respective parties. Tomorrow we will finalise future agitation programmes which will be declared if the road march is obstructed," he added. Meanwhile, BNP is going

ahead with its final preparation for the road march. Various sub-committees continued meetings. Party units in districts through which the motorcade will pass are campaigning. party sources said.

Road accidents kill 4 in Sylhet

tee in favour of Turan bank for the credit. But the Turan bank with-

drew the guarantee through a fax message on January 1, 1995 which was not accepted by the Sonali Bank. The non-acceptance was conveyed to the Turan But Turan bank did not re-

spond since then, the official According to Sonali Bank

officials, credit line facilities to exporters produced good result and helped increase export from Bangladesh to the CIS countries. "Except a dispute with Turan bank, we hardly face any difficulty in realising export bills," said a senior official of Sonali Bank.

BAPEX asked

From Page surprised all by asking BAPEX to sign a contract with Nico to study and develop the reserved gas fields in the country. Nico Resources itself did not propose development of gas fields. Rather, it had proposed

terested in a joint study with BAPEX, provided it received CIDA funds, the sources said. The Ministry had also instructed BAPEX to sign the joint venture agreements by Sunday.

to the Ministry that it was in-

ernment delegation headed by Secretary of State Ramond Chan arrives today. Represen-However, due to technicali-

The Ministry's directive has already sent "wrong signals" to

only chance for revamping BAPEX was to involve it in joint ventures with financially sound companies on competitive deals.

served or ring fenced discovered gas fields, most of those in Block 9, kept out of the Second Round Bidding.

Many streets and low-lying areas in the city went under knee-deep water due to downpour yesterday. This picture

likely today, tomorrow

A heavy downpour flooded many streets and low-lying areas in the city yesterday.

stricken country. Drizzles to heavy rains were

Meteorological Department

It forecast a "normal season'

A sweeper at the Bangabhayesterday.

Officials of Motijheel thana along with CID and SB officials

on Wednesday. According to the official, investigation has so far revealed that the sweeper did the act to

put the blame on a number of khalasis following a row with The official, however, said a team of CID and SB investiga-

tors headed by an ASP of CID and another of SB were probing the incident.

on Monday

KATHMANDU, May 14: Campaigning for the second phase of Nepal's general election reached its climax today, the final day for political parties to woo voters, reports

ister had no doubts. "Absolutely. The primary objective of every country is to safeguard its security," he said.

activists had put up road barri-

"We must implement our

"We are thinking to declare

said another leader. He said top leaders of the

at about 5 am. Later, two more passengers succumbed to their injuries at Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital. An unidentified girl, aged

about 9, was crushed under the wheels of a speeding minibus at Tajpur in Chhatak thana on the Sylhet-Sunamganj highway. Some 35 people sustained

Meanwhile a Canadian gov-

tatives of Nico Resources may also accompany the delegation. ties, it would not be possible for BAPEX to meet the deadline, the sources said.

bigger joint ventures, specially with Malaysian national of company Petronas, which had submitted a clear cut joint venture proposal with BAPEX, the sources said. Energy experts say that the

The country has a dozen re-

By A S M Nurunnabi

the Buriganga river have been

and stores of perishables. There is a common belief

which has absolutely no scientific basis and yet hard to erase is that rivers can absorb any amount of rubbish consigned to them. The plight of the rivers will remain precarious until it is brought home to all concerned the utter fallacy of this belief. So far as the Buriganga is concerned, another disquieting leature is that many people de-pend on this river and its canals for their supply of drinking water notwithstanding the terrible state of pollu-

There is still another grave

against such occupants so far.

BNP to go ahead the meeting venues are far from the Jamuna Bridge, he added. He said there is no procession programme during the march. "We will just pass through the bridge like other private and public transports. Moreover, we have decided to

> lay and jam," he said adding "so there is no scope for any indiscipline." He said the government imposed the ban purely being afraid of opposition movement. The government is conspiring to foil the road march, he

pay toll of our vehicles in ad-

vance to avoid unnecessary de-

Mannan Bhuiyan said that he had talked with Home Minister Mohamad Nasim Thursday night immediately after the government ban and informed him about the road march. " assured him that there would be

no indiscipline and the pro-

grammes will be observed in a

well disciplined manner." But, Bhuiyan said, the assurance failed to convince the Home Minister. The BNP leader hoped that the government's good sense would prevail and it would

withdraw the ban. Otherwise

Police also arrested 11 ac-

cases including murder, mug-

ging, rape and rioting, police

liquor and phensidyl from the

possession of 11 activist. They

were also wanted in several

Police recovered foreign

the government will have to CHITTAGONG, May 14: Two bear all the responsibilities for persons were killed and two the consequences, he warned.

ter Sheikh Hasina.

criminal cases.

others injured in separate incidents at Chanua in Banskhali thana, of the district yesterday, Wanted terrorist police said today, reports UNB. Police said that one Yakub, From Page 1 40, was shot dead on the spot in

groups. A man and a woman tivists of the ruling party from were injured in the incident. the club where Sheikh Sohel The injured persons were adwas present during the drive mitted to Chittagong Medical jointly conducted by BDR and Wazed was wanted in 12

College Hospital. Police said the two groups clashed over land dispute. In another incident, dacoits fired on a young man at Kadamrasul of Khankhanabad union. He died on way to hospital. The

victim Didarul Alam, 25, was killed for passing information to police about some dacoits. Govt would be wise From Page 1

has undertaken not to hold any public meetings anywhere near either side of the bridge and assured minister Nasim that no one will alight from the cars while the cars are on it. If there are additional conditions that need to be fulfilled to further guarantee the safety of the bridge then let the government place them before the opposition. For example there could be limitations on how many vehicles could be on the bridge at a time. This number can easily be controlled through negotiations with the opposition.

We consider the initial offers of the BNP secretary general as constructive. We think the BNP can be made to take more precautionary measures through further talks. But everything will depend on the motive of the government, whether it is to safeguard the bridge or to foil the opposition's programme. Finally we would like to point out that we want to sway

the opposition away from call-

ing hartals. To do so the oppo-

sition must allowed to organise

alternative programmes. They

must be given space and opportunity, and in fact encouraged, to go for other type of political activities other than hartals. But if obstruction is placed before them when they go for alternatives then automatically they will resort back to hartals. And those of us who condemn them for it will have less moral ground to do so, as alternatives are not permitted.

We conclude by asking a simple question. Will Awami League have accepted such a decision from a BNP government? Will they have opted for the ferry at Aricha Ghat with all its physical limitations? If not, then how can it expect the BNP to do so? Acceptance of this simple fact can provide a useful guidance to the present government as to what it should do. We write this today in the hope that the little time that is left will be used to avoid the dramatic deterioration in our political situation that is bound to result from this ban. Please act positively while there is still time. As the President said recently, "do not think that only

you are the patriots and all oth-

ers are traitors."

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Case against Nasima dismissed

By Staff Correspondent A Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on Thursday dismissed the case lodged by police against housewife Nasima under Section 54 of the CrPC for her alleged involvement in subver-

sive activities against the state.

Nasima on April 25 from her

Khilgaon police arrested

East Rampura residence in the city and took her on a two-day remand. Following a court order, she was released from Dhaka Central Jail on May 5. Nasima later told journalists present at the court build-

ing that she would file a

defamation suit against the po-

lice for unnecessary harass-

Metropolitan Magistrate Kazi Meraz Hossain dismissed the case following a petition by lawyers for Nasima. Earlier on Wednesday, OC of Khilgaon thana Giasuddin Chowdhury, who is also investigating officer of the case, submitted a report before the

port of the allegation against Nasima. 28 convicted for assassination of

court. He failed to give any in-

formation or evidence in sup-

Burundi's president BUJUMBURA, Burundi, May 14: Burundi's Supreme Court today convicted 28 people, including five who were condemned to death, for the 1993 assassination of the country's

first democratically-elected president, a justice official said. reports AP.

Most of the those convicted in closed-door hearings were soldiers. President Melchiro Ndadaye, a Hutu, was gunned down by Tutsi paratroopers shortly after his inauguration in an assassination that unleashed

ethnic strife that has since left more than 200,000 Burundians

Car lifter From Page 1 places of the country and sell those by changing colour, chassis and number plates. Bagerhat police recovered a

microbus and a private car

from Sundarmona village un-

der Sadar thana on March 14

this year and arrested Abdur

Rob. 36, and Abu Saeed, 28. They are members of 'Haji Shahed Gang', police said. The two vehicles were stolen from Mirpur, Dhaka. Haji Shahed snatched a microbus (No-02-0002) from Rajshahi bus stand on December 19, 1998 poisoning its driver to

death. He has so far stolen as

many as 200 cars and mi-

crobuses from different parts of

the country, police said.

Khaleda

From Page 1 She said the programme would be peaceful, disciplined

and directly related to the peo-Thousands of people would take part in the 500-km road march and much enthusiasm

had already been created in the

tion to make it a success.

areas through which it would proceed, she added. The opposition leader called upon all to take part in the programme on their own initiative and urged concerned people to extend their all-out co-opera-