

# The Daily Star

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## Hasina in Boston

BOSTON, Apr 5: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrived here Tuesday night to begin her weeklong visit to the United States, reports UNB. Hasina will address a gathering of scholars and academics today on "Leading a Country in Transition: Challenges and Opportunities" at the invitation of President of Harvard University Neil L Rudenstien in the forum of John F. Kennedy school of government.

Over the past several years, prominent individuals like former US President George Bush and Gerald Ford, former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Greek President Constantine Stephanopoulos and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat have delivered lecture at the forum.

On April 8, the Prime Minister will be conferred on prestigious Pearl S Buck Award by renowned Randolph-Macon Women's College for her "visionary leadership, courage and achievements in political, economic and humanitarian

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## Vacancy of BNP MP's seat gazetted

By Staff Correspondent. The Parliament Secretariat yesterday notified in the gazette the vacancy of the seat of BNP lawmaker Shamsuddin Ahmed Eshaq with effect from April 4 last.

The gazette was published following Speaker Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury's announcement in parliament on Tuesday that the seat of Shamsuddin Ahmed had been vacated, as he was absent from the House for 101 consecutive sitting days from 9th to 15th session without leave of the Parliament. The 15th session was prorogued on November last year.

Meanwhile, the BNP has decided to go to the High Court challenging the Speaker's actions.

"I have already been requested by the party secretary general to take the issue to the High Court," BNP leader Barrister Moudud Ahmed told the Daily Star last night. "I am going to file a writ petition against Speaker's action very soon."

When his attention was drawn to the gazette notification declaring that the seat has fallen vacant on April 4.

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## Ashura April 16

The Ashura commemorating the Karbala tragedy, will be observed on April 16, reports UNB.

This was decided at a meeting of National Moon Sighting Committee at the Islamic Foundation yesterday. It was said that the new-year of the Arabic calendar, Hizri, begins Friday (April 7), according to a press release.

## Our new numbers

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## Announcement

Results of cadet college admission test on page 11.

## Inside Today

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April	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
6	-	6:17pm
7	5:44 am	-

## Prayer Timings

April 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:00	5:30
Zohr	1:00	1:30
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:20	6:25
Esha	8:00	8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

# Donors to take up 'political disruption' at Paris meet

Crime, extortion create widespread feeling of insecurity: LCG report

By Inam Ahmed

Donors will discuss the country's political situation at the April 13-14 Bangladesh Development Forum (BDF) meeting in Paris highlighting that political disruption affects foreign investment and reforms.

The continuing absence of the main opposition from parliament does not augur well for stability and continuity in the public domain," a common position paper prepared by the Local Consultative Group of donors said.

"Political disruption affects the prospects of democratic transition and the climate for foreign investment," the paper said. "There appears to have been little progress towards cultivating mutual tolerance of

differences in the public arena. Under these circumstances, issues of national importance cannot be properly addressed. These constraints risk limiting potential progress in many areas of reform as they can prevent institutions from performing their functions impartially. Economic growth and the drive towards poverty alleviation suffer directly as a result and social, economic, civil and political rights remain unfulfilled."

The donors will want to know how the government will ensure equal possibilities for all political parties to reach voters through different media such as radio and television in the coming parliamentary elec-

tions and how transparency and accountability in election funding will be established.

"With the elections due a little more than a year from now, the major political actors need to commit to gestures of dialogue that can lead to a meaningful reconciliation in the political sphere," the donors said. They also expressed their willingness to hold discussions at the soonest for the assessment of their possible assistance for the parliamentary election of 2001.

At the same time, the development partners have noted with growing concern the incidence of violence against women and called for an orientation of the police force and

other focal agents of the criminal justice system and its administration on the principles of service and protection of fundamental human.

The LCG paper said, "The increased reporting of crime and extortion is leading to widespread feelings of insecurity. The human security situation in Bangladesh regarding the integrity of person and property, together with individual and collective economic and political well being is a fundamental concern to all."

"Development partners note with growing concern the incidence of violence against women. Disturbingly, representatives of law enforcement

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# JS amends controversial PSA

By Staff Correspondent

The Jatiya Sangsad amended the controversial Public Safety Act yesterday, relaxing the provisions for bail and dropping the threat of criminal prosecution against police investigators.

The appellate court can now grant bail to a convict after examining the gravity of offence, related documents and evidence. The original law denied courts the authority to grant bail before the disposal of an appeal petition.

The trial court cannot grant bail to an accused during the investigation, which can last up to 75 days.

The provision for criminal prosecution of investigating officers for wilful negligence of duty to protect an accused has been dropped. However, the provision for departmental action against such offences

stands. Parliament adopted as many as nine changes to the PSA just 34 days after it passed the tough law, which triggered widespread protest.

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim piloted a bill containing the amendments. The bill was passed unanimously. The BNP and its allies in opposition continued to abstain from parliament.

Before passing the bill, parliament rejected two proposals from Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Jatiya Party (M-M) to solicit public opinion on the bill and send it to the select committee. Fazole Rabbi, another Jatiya Party MP, suggested a provision to check abuses of the law by police.

The amendment bill was placed before parliament Sunday and was sent to parliamen-

tary standing committee on the Home Ministry the same day. The committee reported back to parliament Tuesday without making any changes.

The BNP members on the committee -- Chief Whip of the Opposition Khandakar Delwar Hossain and retired major Hafizuddin Ahmed -- submitted notes of dissent on the amendment bill before they walked out of the standing committee meeting.

Another major change to the PSA states an accused cannot be treated as an approver unless he makes a confessional statement on the relevant offence.

The amended law also states the tribunal cannot award punishment to an accused based solely on the prior testimony of a prosecution witness without cross-examination, which was

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# Another day of massive loadshedding

By Staff Correspondent

Dhaka's residents endured another 200-megawatt power shortage yesterday as generator problems and low voltage continued to plague the city.

Ghorasal-6, which can generate 210-megawatts, resumed operations Wednesday after a month of technical problems. However, Ghorasal-4, which generates roughly the same amount of power, suspended operations, said sources with the Power Development Board.

Kamlapur, Khilgaon, Kakrail, Paribagh and Teigaon industrial areas suffered routine load shedding, since one of the Ulon 1.32 lakh KV grid station's transformers has been out of order for the last two months.

Dhaka Electricity Supply

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Mother and relatives of Zahir Uddin, who was murdered along with two others at Rasulbagh, wail after hearing the death news yesterday.

Star photo

# Triple murder in city

Bodies of 3 young men recovered near a vacant plot at Rasulbagh

By Staff Correspondent

Unidentified gunmen shot dead three young men at Rasulbagh under Gulshan thana in the city at about 1-30 am yesterday, police and witnesses said.

Police identified one of the victims as Chowdhury Zahir Uddin Babar, who was a trainee at a privately run computer networking training centre, and two others as Selim of Khilgaon and Russel of Rampur. The motive behind the triple murder was yet to be ascertained. Police were deployed in the area as tension prevailed.

An anonymous caller informed police over telephone yesterday morning that three bodies were lying beside a va-

cant plot at Rasulbagh. Police then went to the spot, recovered the bodies and sent those to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy.

A loaded pistol and some empty cartridges were also recovered from the spot. Besides, a mobile phone and Tk eight thousand were found in the pocket of one of the three, police said.

Some local people said they had first heard sounds of three gunshots and that of four more shortly afterwards. It could not however be confirmed whether there was any exchange of fire between the assailants and the victims, police said.

The victims were wearing

tight jeans pant and shirt. Two of the bodies were lying within 10 feet of each other and the other, which also bore stab marks, about 25 feet away.

Police officials suspect the incident might be linked with rivalry over 'domination' on garments trade and toll collection from gambling dens in the locality. It might also be linked with the killing of BCL leader Mabrak Hossain Hira at South Badda under the same thana two days ago, they said.

The OC of Gulshan police, however, said 'internal feud' or previous enmity might have led to the killings.

DMP Commissioner Matur

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The house of former chief engineer of PWD at Road 32, Dhanmondi was bulldozed yesterday.

Star photo

# 2 six-storey bldg 'escape' demolition

By Staff Correspondent

Two six-storey buildings encroaching on public land around Dhanmondi Lake will not be demolished since they "managed to obtain allocation of the lakeside encroached land from the Ministry of Housing and Public Works," said PWD officials.

Public Works Department officials said House-300c on Road 25 (No. 14a new) belongs to "Belal Saheb." The building occupies 1.75 kathas of public land. The owner produced a document of allotment.

House-314 on Road-26 (No. 15a new) belongs to T. Hossain, a former secretary of the Land Ministry. The building occupies more than half of Dhanmondi Lake, narrowing the lake to just 15 feet.

"There is no doubt that Hos-

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# 10000 shanties gutted, 30000 homeless

By Staff Correspondent

About 30,000 people were rendered homeless as a fire gutted over 10,000 shanties at a slum at Begunbari in the city yesterday, police and the victims said.

The affected are mostly garments workers and day labourers. Several people were injured while dousing the fire and rescuing aged people and children. Arrangements were made for their treatment.

Witnesses said the fire originated from the south-east corner of Siddik Matobar Slum and spread quickly. It was yet to be ascertained what caused the fire.

The fire was brought 'under control' at about 3:30 pm and 'totally doused' at 4:35 pm, an official said.

ADC Ibrahim Fatmi told this correspondent that the fire

engulfed the entire slum quickly because of strong wind at the time.

Two sisters --Majeda and Sajeda--who are garments workers were seen crying as all their belongings and savings over the last 10 months were burnt to ashes. They

Bought various household goods for their parents in Barisal and were preparing to go home shortly but they lost everything, they told this correspondent.

"We do not know where to stay now and what to eat," both of them said while crying.

Like Majeda and Sajeda, hundreds of other garment workers, mostly female, looked bewildered and were crying helplessly.

When slum dwellers and fire brigade personnel were engaged

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# Kanika passes away

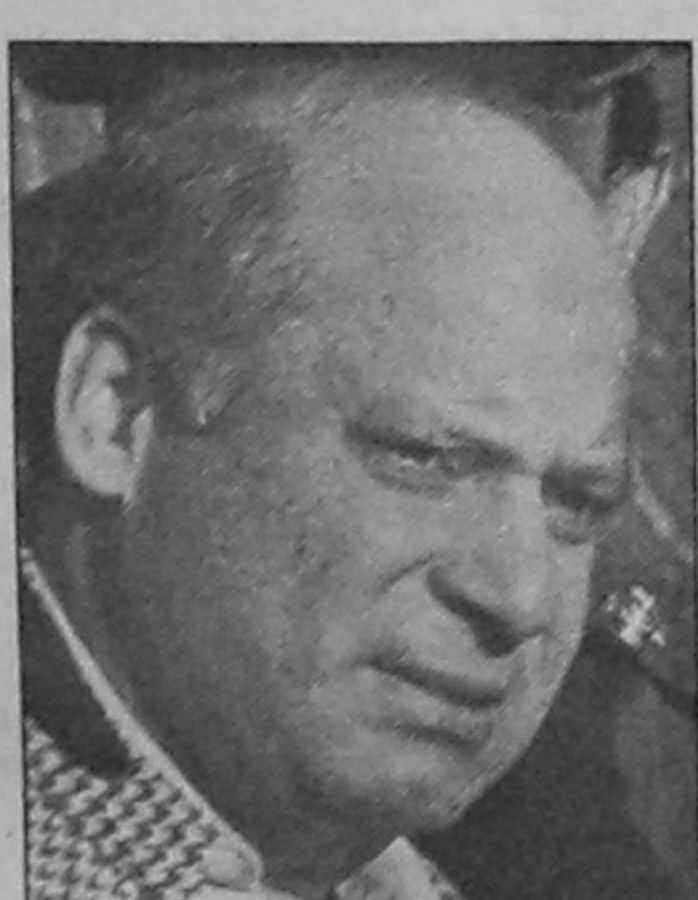
CALCUTTA, Apr 5: Noted Rabinda Sangeet exponent Kanika Bandyopadhyay died this morning after prolonged illness. She was 76, reports PTI.

The end came at 6:20 am, hospital sources said.

Bandyopadhyay, one of the disciples of Rabindranath Tagore, was shifted to the SSKM

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# Verdict in Sharif's case today amid tight security



Nawaz Sharif

KARACHI, Apr 5: A court will issue tomorrow a verdict in the trial of ousted Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who could face death on charges of trying to kill General Pervez Musharraf, the army chief who ousted him, report Reuters, AP.

Security is expected to be extremely tight when Sharif travels from his prison cell to the Karachi Anti-Terrorism Court to hear Judge Rehamat Hussain Jaffri rule on charges of attempted murder, kidnapping, terrorism, and aircraft hijacking. State prosecutors have asked for the maximum sentence against Sharif, his brother Shahbaz and five others over a

series of incidents surrounding Musharraf's return flight to Pakistan from an official visit to Sri Lanka on October 12.

The verdict comes almost 21 years to the day after a previous military ruler, General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, ordered the execution of the man he ousted, Pakistan's first elected prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, for conspiracy to murder.

But few expect Sharif, the twice-elected and twice-ousted premier, to hang if found guilty and Musharraf, his former army chief, has said repeatedly that he is not "a vindictive man."

The court, ironically, is one of those that Sharif set up to

break judicial log-jams in Pakistan's overburdened legal system and dispense quick justice in response to a public clamour.

The trial, which started in January, has been marked by theatrical walk-outs by Sharif's lawyers and the unexplained murder of Iqbal Raad, his legal spokesman and a key defence team member.

There has been little public agitation for or against Sharif since he was arrested at his luxurious official residence in Islamabad on October 12, hours after he sacked Musharraf as army chief and replaced him.

Despite calls by the wife of deposed Sharif to hold demonstrations if her husband is

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# Betting frenzy in Pakistan over Sharif's fate

ISLAMABAD, Apr 5: The hijacking trial of deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif has started a betting frenzy in Pakistan, reports AP.

Some of the biggest money is being wagered in southern Karachi, where the antiterrorist court will announce its verdict and sentencing tomorrow, say stock brokers. If convicted Sharif could face a death sentence.

The larger bookmakers in

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# Graft charges: Laloo sent to jail, Rabri gets bail

PATNA, Apr 5: A court offered bail today to the chief minister of India's Bihar state but sent her husband to prison on charges of illegally amassing four million rupees (93,000 dollars), report AFP, AP.

Chief Minister Rabri Devi and her husband Laloo Prasad Yadav surrendered at a special court of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the state capital Patna this morning.

The court had issued arrest warrants against the couple on Tuesday after the CBI filed a formal chargesheet, accusing

them of embezzling four million rupees between 1990 and 1996, when Yadav was chief minister.

Yadav installed Devi, an illiterate mother of nine, as chief minister in 1997 after he stepped down from the post over a \$60-million-dollar financial scandal which has yet to be resolved.

Judge SK Lal granted bail to Devi on a personal bond of 200,000 rupees (4,700 dollars) each, but he sent her husband to the local Bear prison. United

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Laloo Prasad

# Sri Lankans first among star-cast

Sports Reporter

be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. The four Sri Lankans will feature in the Asia Eleven which will be led by Pakistan ace Wasim Akram.

Akram will reach Dhaka tomorrow from Pakistan while his two other compatriots -- Moin Khan and Abdul Razzak, who played against Zimbabwe in their first match of the three-nation meet in Antigua, will fly in from the Caribbean a few

days later.

The day-night limited-over match, organised by International Cricket Council (ICC) as part of the ongoing International Cricket Week 2000, will

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**Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha**

**Rajuk Bhaban, Dhaka**

### Notice Inviting International Tender

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from intending bonafide Bangladeshi nationals company/institution having experience and reputation in hotel business/management and construction who has got link with the 5 Star International Chain Hotel Management for leasing out most suitable plots measuring more or less 3.68 (three point six eight) acres in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka on 99 years lease basis for constructing a 5 Star Hotel of international standard.

Interested bidders may collect tender schedule from Sonali Bank/Agrani/Janata Bank and Cashier, Rajuk Bhaban, Dhaka on payment of Taka 5,000/- (Taka five thousand) only in cash (non-refundable) from 06/04/2000 to 21/04/2000 during office hours. Tender forms must be submitted accompanied by a security of Taka 1000000.00 (Taka one crore) in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft in favour of "Chairman, Rajuk, Dhaka" from any scheduled bank of Dhaka city.

Tender forms will be received in the office of the Joint Secretary (Dev), Ministry of Housing & Public Works, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka, Member (Finance)/(Dev)/(Adm. & Land)/(Estate), Director (Estate), Chief Engineer, Rajuk, Rajuk Bhaban, Dhaka and Commissioner, Dhaka Division, Dhaka from intending persons/company/institution up to 1.00 PM on 07/05/2000. Tenders will be opened at 1.30 PM in the Conference Room (3rd floor) of Rajuk Bhaban, Dhaka on the same day in presence of the bidders presence (if any).

The authority reserves the right to accept any tender or to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason.

**Chairman**  
**Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha**  
**Rajuk Bhaban, Dhaka.**

GD-301