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Tin Bigha corridor India to ensure free movement of inhabitants

BSS, New Delhi

India has responded positively to a Bangladesh request to ensure unfettered movement of inhabitants in the Tin Bigha corridor.

The Indian assurance came during the three-day meeting of the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Working Group (JWG) which concluded in New Delhi Saturday evening, leader of the Bangladesh delegation, Janibul Haque, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs said yesterday.

The Indian team was headed by GK Pillai, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs.

Haque said during the meeting the Indian side made it clear that there had been relaxation with regard to the movement of inhabitants and it is expected that the

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Dipu surrenders, sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dipu Chowdhury, principal accused in the sensational Taraj Uddin murder case, and two other accused yesterday surrendered to court and were sent to Dhaka Central Jail.

Dipu, son of State Minister for



Dipu Chowdhury

Shipping Mofazzal Husain Chowdhury Maya, along with the two others -- Sourav and Rana -- appeared before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court at about 12:30 pm and prayed for bail.

The CMM, Shailendra Kumar Adhikari, rejected their bail prayer and sent them to jail.

The three came to the court with their lawyer Syed Rezaur Rahman. Moving the bail petition, he said that the accused were implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy.

"They have voluntarily appeared before the court showing respect to rule of law. They would not abscond if bail is granted to them," the lawyer added.

Court Inspector Alfa Zaman Nakib, on behalf of the state, said investigation into the case is now at

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BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia leads a gathering of party leaders and activists near the Dainik Bangla crossing during the alliance's sit-in around the Secretariat yesterday (left). The Paltan crossing wore a deserted look (right) during the programme.



If Khaleda keeps out of JS, why does she take salary?

PM sharply reacts to rejection of her offer



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday categorically said if Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia does not feel it necessary to return to the House, she should quit parliament.

"Then why is she (Khaleda) holding the seat and post? Why is she enjoying salary and allowances from the taxpayer's money if she does not want to return to parliament? If she doesn't, let her resign,"

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she said in a sharp rebuttal to Khaleda's rejection of her proposal to return to the House.

On Friday, while talking to diplomats, the Prime Minister had offered to call general election anytime provided the opposition leader comes to parliament and tells when she wants the polls.

Rejecting the offer, Khaleda demanded resignation of the Prime Minister and transfer of power to a caretaker government, saying it

Opposition calls countrywide hartal on Feb 25, 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led opposition alliance yesterday called for countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal on February 25 and 26 to press the demand for immediate resignation of the government.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Central Liaison Committee at 29 Minto Road with BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair.

Announcing the programme at a press briefing, Bhuiyan said the Awami League government has

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Sit-in staged peacefully

People heave sigh of relief as sanity prevails on both sides

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The opposition-sponsored four-hour sit-in around the Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday passed off peacefully. No untoward incident was reported anywhere around the Secretariat during the programme that ended at 2:00pm.

No fresh programme was announced during the sit-in. However, at a meeting in the afternoon, the central liaison committee of the four-party alliance called dawn-to-dusk hartal on February 25 and 26.

Repeated requests were made

through megaphone to maintain peace and order throughout the sit-in, and activists were asked not to react to any sort of provocation.

The city wore a deserted look as police had put barricades on major roads and entry points.

In her address to a gathering near the Dainik Bangla crossing, BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia demanded immediate resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government and subsequent hand-over of power to a caretaker administration as per constitutional provisions.

She also implored President Shahabuddin Ahmed not to react to any provocation from the Awami League government, saying there was no force in the country that could remove him from presidency. "You are not the president of Awami League," she said, "you are the president of 13 crore people of Bangladesh."

Khaleda accused Awami League of hatching a conspiracy to replace President Shahabuddin and warned that the people would foil its evil design.

She said the ruling party's chances to return to power disap-

peared the moment the mainstream opposition parties had formed an alliance and launched a joint movement.

Its heinous activities over the last few days have left no chance for the party to win the coming polls, she added.

"Now they are conspiring to foil the forthcoming general elections, thereby creating instability and anarchy in the country," Khaleda said. "Killings of a police constable inside a mosque at Mohammadpur and another at Uttara, armed attack on the BNP procession and killing of

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INSIDE TODAY

ARTICLE 4

Hartal or harakiri?
M Shafiullah

FOCUS 5

Davos: A few words of
contrition are not
enough

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Feb 19		5.56 pm
Feb 20	6-28 am	

Prayer Timings		
February 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	5-30	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-30
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-00	6-05
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

India maul Malaysia

SPORTS REPORTER

Fancied India registered their second victory in the GrameenPhone Under-17 Asia Cup with a comprehensive seven-wicket win over Malaysia in their Group A clash at BKSP yesterday.

In the battle of Gulf nations also in Savar, Oman suffered a seven-wicket defeat at the hands of United Arab Emirates.

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The Emirates scored 231 for three in 39.2 overs replying to Oman's 230 in 45 overs.

At the number two ground of BKSP, opener Shikar Dhawan scored an unbeaten 64 as the Indians, chasing an unimpressive Malaysia total of 143 in 45 overs, finished the match off in just 23.3 overs.

After India lost their first wicket for 16, Dhawan shared some useful

'Note' received from abductors in CHT

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Crack troops from Bangladesh Army are combing deep forests in Rangamati district looking for three European consultants for road building, abducted on Friday allegedly by a tribal armed group demanding Tk nine crore as ransom.

Officials in Dhaka said yesterday there was no contact so far with the abductors, suspected to be from a tribal militant group who wants more

A late night report says, local headmen contacted the abductors yesterday evening and received a 'note' from them in which they requested the civil administration to lift the cordon. The civil administration immediately sent a reply to the abductors seeking information about the hostages.

autonomy for the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

Even an intermediary, Union Parishad Chairman of Mahlachhari Archemedis Chakma, have failed to establish contact with the armed group who abducted at gun point Torben Mikkelsen and Nels Hulggard of Denmark and Tim Selbi of Britain. They are consultants for a project for building a road from Betchhari in Naniarchar.

The abductors had allowed another British consultant, David Weston, to return to Rangamati with a message from them for the ransom.

British and Danish diplomats have gone to Rangamati. They have reportedly urged restraint in handling the kidnappers.

But officials said they believe that the hostages would be released unharmed and ruled out paying

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Chetia jailed in forex case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Fifth Assistant Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday awarded three years' rigorous imprisonment to Anup Chetia, general secretary of the United Liberated Front of Assam (ULFA) and acquitted two others in a case filed against them for possess-

ing currencies of 16 countries.

Judge Mohammad Humayun Kabir found Chetia guilty and pronounced the verdict.

Two other accused in the same case Babul Sharma and Laxmi Prasad Goswami were acquitted as the allegations brought against them were not proved.

Chetia and his two associates

were arrested from a residence at Adabar under Mohammadpur thana on December 21, 1997. Police recovered currencies of 16 countries, a satellite telephone set and some forged passports from their possession.

Four separate cases were registered with Mohammadpur thana on

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