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There's less time than we're  
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**PM leaves for  
London today**

**BSS, Dhaka**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will leave Dhaka for London this morning en route to Belgium to attend a special summit for the least developed countries (LDC) scheduled to begin in Brussels on May 14.

Hasina will lead a high-powered delegation to the Third UN Conference on LDC which will be hosted jointly by the European Union in cooperation with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Top leaders of 49 LDCs are expected to attend the weeklong conference.

The Prime Minister will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria, Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary.

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**Attack on newsmen  
Charge sheet  
against Mamun  
submitted**

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**

The terrorist Ward Commissioner Mamunur Rashid Mamun has been chargesheeted in a case filed with Panchalaish thana under Public Safety Act (PSA) for assaulting four senior journalists of the daily Purbokone on April 18.

The case was filed on April 20 by one of the two victims, Md Iskander Ali Chowdhury, chief sub-editor of the daily, accusing Mamun and his four accomplices.

The Investigation Officer (IO) of the case S I Arman Hossain submitted the charge sheet against Mamun as the lone accused to the CMM's court, Chittagong yesterday morning with evidences of 14 witnesses.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Abdul Malek accepted the charge sheet and sent the case to Public Safety Tribunal for hearing on charge-framing.

**14 killed in polls violence  
in five Indian states**

**AFP, New Delhi**

At least 14 people were killed yesterday as five Indian states held elections seen as a crucial test for main opposition leader Sonia Gandhi as well as the communists who appeared in difficulty.

More than 132 million voters were eligible to choose among over 5,000 candidates in 823 constituencies in West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry.

The eastern states of Assam and West Bengal witnessed the most violent incidents.

In West Bengal, at least six people were killed, police said.

A driver was killed at Tutagarh, 30 kilometres north of Calcutta, when a bomb that he was transporting in his car exploded. Unidentified assailants in Bishnupur, in southern West Bengal, killed two supporters of the resurgent opposition leader Mamata Banerjee. Another man

was killed in Mainkatala, north Calcutta, when a bomb exploded during clashes between supporters of the communist party and the Banerjee-led Trinamool party.

A youth died when he fell off a bridge in south Calcutta while being chased by security personnel while the body of another unidentified youth was brought to the Calcutta central hospital.

In Assam, at least six people were killed. Suspected tribal militants ambushed a security patrol killing two soldiers and a civilian and injuring two others in Karbi Anglong in southern Assam, a police spokesman said.

In a separate incident, three voters were killed when rival groups battled using crude bombs and firearms near Gossagaon in west Assam.

Reports of shooting, booth-capturing, ballot-snatching and arson were also received from other

parts of the state, which has already seen a bloody month-long campaign which has left upto 60 dead and 175 injured.

The separatist outfit United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) earlier had issued a call for a boycott of the poll.

India's Election Commission has ordered fresh polls in at least 75 polling stations in Assam and West Bengal where polling was stalled due to violence.

In the southeastern former French colony of Pondicherry, a 55-year-old voter was trampled to death by a mob at a polling booth, witnesses said. An election officer said the man died of a heart attack.

In southwestern Kerala violence led to the death of one ruling communist party supporter in the Kannur district.

A local politician and 35 of his supporters were arrested in Madras

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**Massive construction on Muhuri by India  
Diverted watercourse breeds  
further border bickering**

**NAZRUL ISLAM, back from Feni**

Massive construction by India on the Muhuri river in the country's southeastern border has drastically diverted the watercourse, giving rise to a complex and seemingly never-ending dispute between the two neighbours.

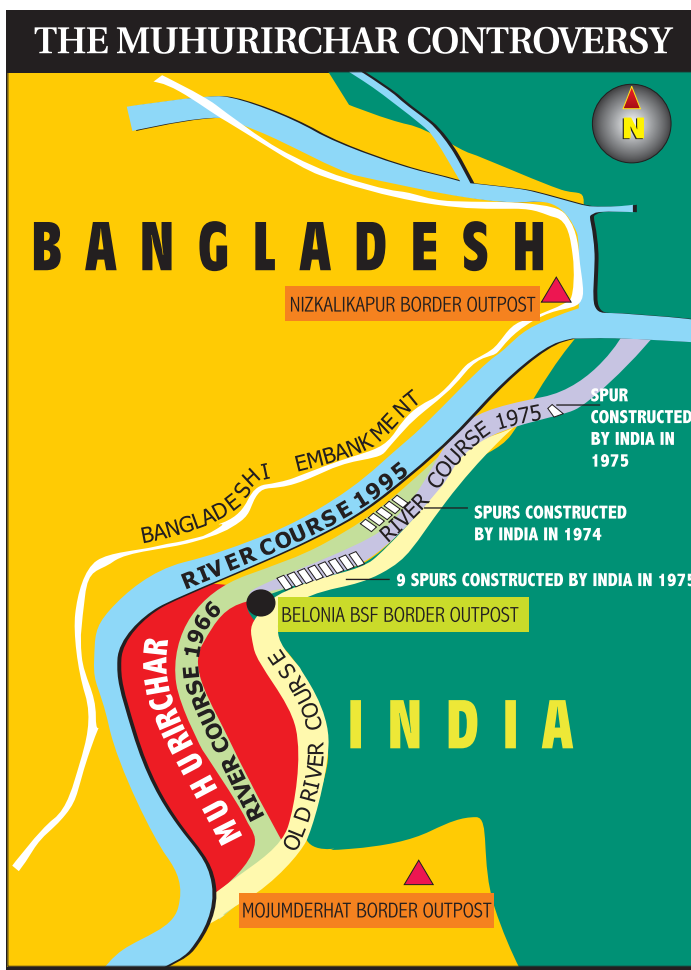
Due to the diversion of the stream, the Muhurirchar islet on the river has become the bone of contention. India, referring to the 1974 Indira-Mujib agreement, claims ownership of the islet which Bangladesh brushes aside.

According to the Chakla Rowshanabad Survey Map of Bengal in 1892-94, the Muhuri river was inside the then East Bengal. With the emergence of the islet on the river in the early 1960s, the Indian authorities claimed its ownership and the dispute started.

In addition to the diplomatic crisis it has created, the diversion of the river course has also taken away Bangladeshi farmlands and homesteads worth crores of taka, according to local people, border security and Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) officials.

"Construction of spurs and revetments upstream has been resulting in continuous loss of Bangladeshi land and expansion of the disputed Muhurirchar," an official told The Daily Star. He

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**7,257 expelled  
on first day of  
HSC exams**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Massive copying and widespread violence marked the first day of the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations yesterday. As many as 7257 examinees were expelled from different centres on charge of copying and adopting unfair means during the test on English first paper.

At least ten persons were injured, two of whom seriously, in a clash between two groups of people at Dawkandi Degree College HSC examination centre under Durgapur upazilla in Rajshahi, our

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**CEC calls for  
arrest of listed  
criminals  
before polls**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) M A Syed yesterday called upon the law enforcers to nab the wanted criminals, extortionists and armed cadres irrespective of their political affiliation well before the next general elections.

The CEC made the call at a meeting with the senior members of the law enforcing agencies while reviewing the existing law and order

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**Classic DB operation  
Bid to commit robbery foiled at  
Karwan Bazar; two held**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

It was a classic operation by the Detective Branch (DB) of police.

Acting on a tip-off by a source that notorious criminal Mitford Sagor and his gang of about seven would commit robbery in a vehicle carrying the day's sale proceeds of Karwan Bazar kitchen market to a bank, DB officials wearing lungi took position at every corner of the area. Two young officers in the guise of the kitchen market money carriers boarded an autorickshaw with a bag.

As the vehicle started proceeding to the nearby Pubali Bank at about 1 pm yesterday, the gang intercepted it at the intersection near Ambar Shah Mosque. Within seconds, the DB Team-8 challenged the robbers from all directions. The puzzled gang members then opened fire on the DB personnel and exploded several homemade crackers while fleeing towards Tejgaon. DB officials with

pistols and automatic guns retaliated with a volley of shots.

With the sound of gunshots and cracker explosions all around, hundreds of people in the area started running for safety. The DB men caught two robbers with a .32 revolver loaded with four bullets, a modern flick knife, a petrol bomb and a homemade bomb. Other members of the gang managed to escape.

DB sources said the arrested are Sagor aged about 30 and Johnny alias Saiful aged about 25.

At least five day labourers and several DB men were bullet-hit in the incident. Three of the day labourers admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital are Abul Bashar, Khorsheed and Shafiq.

DB Sub Inspector Hossain said one of their informers also suffered bullet wounds.

"I was wearing a lungi on my trousers and we all waited for the

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Caught red-handed... an examinee at a Daudkandi centre begs mercy from the invigilator after being caught while adopting unfair means on the first day of the HSC examinations yesterday.

**SQ Chowdhury, Zahid  
expelled from BNP**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

BNP yesterday expelled Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury and Anwar Zahid, two of its senior leaders, on charge of acting against the party interests and breaking its discipline.

Chowdhury is a member of parliament elected from Chittagong while Zahid was recently removed from the post of BNP chief's press adviser.

A meeting of the BNP's highest decision-making body the National Standing Committee made the decision last night in the wake of growing discontent in the main opposition party over the recent remarks the two leaders had made against top party leaders.

The meeting took the decision unanimously as per the party's constitution, according to a BNP statement issued after the nearly

two-hour meeting ending at 10.15 p.m.

It also issued two separate notices for the expelled leaders, which would be sent to them shortly, meeting sources said.

Held at BNP's election office at Banani with party Chairperson Khaleda Zia in the chair, the meeting was attended by all but two members of the standing committee. The absentees are Abdul Matin Chowdhury, who is out of the city, and KM Obaidur Rahman now in jail.

The action against Chowdhury followed his "adverse comments" against the BNP chief, her eldest son Tareque Rahman, Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, city BNP President Sadeque Hossain Khoka MP and other mainstream moderate leaders.

Zahid, who has been blamed for the debacle in the BNP-led alliance

owing to Ershad's desertion, had also subscribed to some of the comments Chowdhury had made.

Meeting sources said the decision to expel the two top hardliners was arrived at following a detailed discussion on their recent anti-party activities.

SQ Chowdhury, who joined BNP on the eve of June 12, 1996 parliamentary polls, at a recent discussion in the city made an oblique reference to Khaleda and her son and said, "Nowadays, the dog is not wagging the tail, rather the tail is wagging the dog."

The discussion was organised by Swadhinata Forum, an organisation of the ultra-rightwing and anti-liberation politicians, at the Jatiya Press Club.

His remarks drew flak from the

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**Menacing BSF manoeuvres  
on at northern frontiers**

**Residents in bordering areas still panicky**

**NAIMUL HAQ, back from Northern Borders**

Despite political and diplomatic efforts to defuse border tension following the recent skirmishes at Roumari, the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) continues its menacing manoeuvres creating tension among Bangladeshis living in villages close to the borders.

This correspondent visited the borders in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and Joypurhat and witnessed how BSF has been keeping the Bangladeshis in constant panic.

Witnesses said that in violation of

'mutual ground rules,' BSF personnel frequently come up to the 'zero line' on the plea of patrol and cross over to Bangladesh villages to carry out 'operations,' especially at night. This makes frightened villagers to leave their houses. The troops use searchlights to pinpoint 'targeted houses' mainly in Tin Bigha enclave in Lamonirhat.

In many border observation posts, BSF has substantially increased its strength and deployed many troops in recently dug bunkers, 'civil informers' told this correspondent.

"We are scared by BSF move-

ments at night. They threaten us if we go near the border even to harvest paddy from our ancestral crop lands", said Abdul Latif of Baraibari at Roumari border. His house, about 60 yards from the Indian border observation post (BOP), was set ablaze during the recent skirmishes.

"BSF threats come almost everyday. We cannot stay in our houses after nightfall because it is not safe. So we left the village and moved to Roumari for the time being," said

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Bullet marks on the BDR camp (left) and completely damaged homesteads bear testimony to the April 18 skirmishes on the Roumari border in the country's north.