

Talks with Delhi on border issues likely next month

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh and India are expected to hold the first official level meeting on the border issues in the first week of June in Delhi, a top official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said last night.

Foreign Secretary Syed Muazzem Ali told BSS at his office that Bangladesh is confident that the first meeting will be followed by second meeting in Dhaka by mid June.

A Joint Secretary will lead the official level meeting, he informed.

The decision to hold meeting next month followed communications between the two sides. Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Mani Lal Tripathy called on the Foreign Secretary at his office yesterday evening and discussed the forthcoming meeting.

The Delhi meeting will discuss and determine the terms of reference of the Joint Working Group being formed between the two countries as per decision of the Foreign Secretary-level meeting held in last February. The other matter to be taken up in the Delhi meeting is the composition of JWG and the modalities of JWG session.

Case against 16 lawyers: HC asks for papers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the PSA tribunal in Dhaka to send to it all documents relating to the case against 16 lawyers and BNP lawmaker M Murshed Khan, charged under PSA for allegedly creating terror during a demonstration at the Supreme Court on January 12 this year.

The tribunal has been made a respondent in the case.

A Division Bench of HC comprising Justice MA Aziz and Shamsul Huda gave the order to the tribunal following a petition by the defendants' lawyer Barrister Maudud Ahmed.

Referring to the charges against the lawyers and the MP, Maudud Ahmed said that they did not create any terror, resort to vandalism or kick on the door of the Chief Justice's chamber.

A politically motivated lawyer filed the case against the 16 lawyers who protested appointment of two judges in the Supreme Court, he said.

The counsel further said permission of the Chief Justice is required to investigate any incident at the Supreme Court or file a case in this regard. "But in this case, we have no knowledge that the Chief Justice had given permission."

Combing operation Over 1000 held on first day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the first day of nationwide combing operation police yesterday arrested more than 1000 people including some listed criminals.

Police started a month long drive to arrest criminals and recovered firearms in a bid to restore the law and order across the country.

Our Staff Correspondent, from Chittagong adds, police arrested

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Requiem for Middle East peace process
Column: Perspectives
Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

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How important is the role of election observers?

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
May 28		6.40 pm
May 29	5-11 am	

Prayer Timings

May 28

	Azan	Jamaat
Fazr	4-20	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Environment ministry 'secretly' permits export of rare turtles

Five firms procuring 200 tons of 'shundhi kachhim'

MORSHED ALI KHAN

The Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) has 'secretly' permitted at least five business houses to export more than 200 tons of rare flap shelled spotted turtles (shundhi kachhim).

The turtles have been classified as 'vulnerable' in the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List of Threatened Amphibians and Reptiles of Bangladesh.

The permission was given on the basis of "inspection reports" compiled by a section of unscrupulous officials and inspectors of the Department of Forest in Dhaka. The inspectors in their reports said the respective business houses do have stock of these turtles and that the reptiles were produced in their respective turtle farm.

But, the IUCN and sources in the Department of Forest confirmed that there is not a single turtle farm in the country. Moreover, an investigation by The Daily Star reveals that none of these business houses has any stock of turtles whatsoever. At least two of the five beneficiaries have even failed to

procure the turtles for export as the rivers, haors, beels and low-lying areas are now almost devoid of turtles thanks to indiscriminate poaching.

By allowing the hunting and export of these endangered reptiles, the MoEF has not only violated an international commitment to preserve wild life, but also made a mockery of a gazette notification of June 1998 forbidding hunting of all wild animals.

Turtles are amphibian scavengers that help rivers to remain pollution-free. Environmentalists in India once released turtles in the Ganges to rid the river of pollution.

When approached for comments at the Department of Forest in Dhaka, the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Abu Akhtar Hossain Khan told The Daily Star that his office was only responsible for conducting the inspection. He said he signed the report on the basis of the inspection reports compiled by an Assistant Conservator of Forest (ACF).

When it was pointed out that not a single turtle could be found in stock with the farms during The Daily Star investigation, the DFO replied, "When

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Death of doctor's wife: Murder case accepted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A murder case was finally accepted yesterday by Dhanmondi police regarding the mysterious death of a doctor's wife at Bangladesh Medical College Hospital in the city on Thursday.

The case was filed by the brother of Julekha Akhter against her husband Dr. Jalilur Rahman. Julekha's body was recovered from a toilet at the hospital, where Dr. Jalilur was an anaesthetist. She was a nurse at a clinic in Mohammadpur.

Police on Thursday night had refused to record a murder case on the plea that they did not receive the autopsy report of the body though an inquest report said that her finger nails turned blue and there were

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Fresh voter list put on display

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday put on display a fresh voter list at offices of the EC and various local bodies across the country.

The list will remain on display at district and upazila level EC offices, offices of union parishes, city corporations and municipalities and those of ward commissioners in municipal areas till announcement of the schedule for general election.

However, the fresh list is yet to

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Three flamingos have been added to the collection of the National Zoo at Mirpur in the city. Found aplenty in South America, these birds with thin legs, long neck and curved beak have been imported from Thailand at a cost of Tk 65,000 each. After a two-month observation, the flamingos were put on display recently.

Yasmeen murder HC likely to complete verdict today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Death Reference Bench of the High Court started delivering the verdict in Yasmeen Murder Case yesterday.

The bench comprising Justice Abdul Matin and Justice Marzul Huq are expected to complete the verdict today.

Three policemen including an ASI were sentenced to death by a trial court which found them guilty of rape and murder of the 17-year-old domestic help after promising her a lift in their van to Dinajpur on August 24, 1995.

The incident stirred public outrage and seven people were killed in police firing at Dinajpur.

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Gangraped girl abducted again

UNB, Satkhira

A teenage girl abducted and raped by some youths recently was again kidnapped by them on Saturday night.

Witnesses said the alleged rapists took away the 15-year-old girl from Sadar Hospital, a day after she was admitted.

"They held me hostage at gunpoint and took away my daughter from the hospital bed," said the teenager's mother, and also a nurse at the hospital.

The girl, hailing from Gunahkati village in Asasuni upazila, was abducted three weeks ago. She was found in a pool of blood on a cross-

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Charges in three share scam cases to be framed June 11

M SHAMSUR RAHMAN

the companies concerned with the Court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Dhaka, on April 1997.

On July 1, 1997, the three accused companies filed three revision applications with the Sessions Judge's Court, which referred those to the High Court (HC) for quashment.

The HC on December 9, 1997 rejected the lower court's suggestion, prompting the three accused to go before the Supreme Court (SC), which stayed the HC verdict.

On March 15, 1998, the matter came up for hearing by the Full Bench of the SC and on May 13, 1998, it rejected the leave petitions by the accused companies.

The SC observed that the sessions judge's recommendations for quashment of the cases on the ground that the SEC executive director was not legally authorised to file those was premature.

It said there was prima facie evidence of violation of securities law.

"We are also satisfied that there is prima facie allegation

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Rejoinder and our reply

Chittagong City BNP leaders Abu Sufian and Advocate Quamrul Islam Sajjad have contradicted parts of a Daily Star report headlined "JCD activists regrouping to regain lost ground" published on May 22.

In a joint statement, they termed parts of the report on their role as completely imaginary and fabricated. The report implicating the Chittagong BNP leaders was published only to divert public attention from the united movement the people of Chittagong had launched against terrorism, they alleged.

Abu Sufian claimed that the report was baseless. "The people of Chittagong know that I started my political career as a student leader

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OIC decides to halt political contacts with Israel

AFP, Doha (Qatar)

Muslim countries agreed on Saturday to stop political contacts with Israel until it ends deadly clashes with the Palestinians and heeds UN resolutions on settling the Middle East conflict.

Winding up an emergency one-day meeting, the 56-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) said it had decided to "halt all political contacts with the Israeli government so long as the aggression and blockade against the Palestinian people and its national authority continue and as long as Israel refuses to implement (related) UN resolutions."

Foreign ministers of the 22-member Arab League called at a meeting in Cairo last week for a freeze on relations with Israel but stopped short of demanding a full break in ties.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat had appealed to the OIC gathering for strong support for the Palestinian intifada (uprising) to end Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip that dates to the 1967 Middle East war.

In response, the OIC - representing 1.2 billion Muslims around the world -



M Rafiqul Islam, Chief of Air Staff designate

Rafiqul new air chief, 3 made maj generals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Air Commodore M Rafiqul Islam, ndu, psc has been promoted to the rank of Air Vice-Marshal and appointed Chief of Air Staff, Bangladesh Air Force, and three brigadier generals of the Army been promoted to the rank of Major General, according to an official announcement here yesterday.

The announcement by the Ministry of Defence said the promotion and appointment of Air Commodore Islam will take effect on June 4. He will

replace Air Vice-Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed, ndc, bems, psc.

Air Vice-Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed has been promoted to the rank of Air Marshal with effect from June 3. He will proceed on normal retirement on completion of his tenure as Chief of Air Staff on June 3, the announcement said.

The promoted major generals are Director General of SSF Major General Sikdar Mohammad Shahab Uddin, Adjutant General of Army Headquarters, Major General Tariq Ahmed Siddiq and Bogra Area Commander Major

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Maj Gen Sikdar Shahab Uddin



Maj Gen Abu Ishaq Ibrahim



Maj Gen Tariq Ahmed Siddiq

Second phase of Siddhiganj plant

Move for accord with Russian firm under supplier's credit

SHARIER KHAN

The government is secretly pursuing a supplier's credit agreement with Technopromexport (TPE), Russian company, to set up the second phase of Siddhiganj 210 megawatt power plant, sources said.

Ironically, the first phase of the plant - for which the same company signed an agreement back in 1995 and was supposed to start operation in 1998 - is far from being complete till date.

This is being held despite discouragement from

donors that supplier's credit, which creates more scopes for corruption than any other method of lending, should be avoided. The donors maintain that terms and conditions under a supplier's credit are kept secret in all cases and they often turn out to put undue pressure on the country's foreign exchange reserve.

The Economic Relations Division (ERD) has begun negotiations for loan agreement with the TPE from last week. On behalf of the Power Development Board (PDB), an official of the first-phase Siddhiganj plant is attend

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