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Dhaka, Delhi to renew trade agreement

UNB, Dhaka

Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury and his Indian counterpart Murosal Maran have agreed to renew the Indo-Bangladesh Trade Agreement as soon as possible.

The two ministers came to the agreement when they met in Doha on Sunday on the sidelines of the WTO meet.

During the meeting Khasru also renewed Bangladesh's request to India for concrete steps regarding the longstanding issue of duty-free access of 25 Bangladeshi products to the Indian market, as agreed twice before in prime ministerial meetings.

According to a message received

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Cabinet decision on poverty alleviation, 2 ordinances

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cabinet yesterday approved the recommendations of two secretarial committees on poverty alleviation and human resources development and took up special programmes for their implementation.

Held with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair, the Cabinet at its weekly meeting also approved the two ordinances promulgated during the caretaker government's tenure ahead of the 8th parliamentary polls, bringing changes in the Representation of People Order 1972.

Cabinet sources said the meeting approved a Tk 40 crore project for poverty alleviation and decided to implement the recommendations of a secretarial committee on human resources development under the agenda for first 100 days of this government.

The meeting unanimously agreed to expand the Food for Education Programme and introduce

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Tribunal orders reinstatement of 9 cops

BSS, Dhaka

The Administrative Tribunal yesterday ordered reinstatement of the services of nine police officers who lost their jobs during the past government.

Judge A K M Fazlul Karim ordered their reinstatement in services with all benefits declaring the government decision as "illegal and without lawful authorities."

The officers who are to get back their job include four additional inspector generals and five deputy inspector generals (DIGs). They were given forced retirement on completion of 25 years of services under the 1974 Government Employees Act. They are all former members of the army and were inducted into police service in 1977.

The officers earlier appealed to the government for reinstatement and after rejection of their applications they sought redress in the tribunal saying there was no basis of

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Nov 13		5-13 pm
Nov 14	6-13 am	

Prayer Timings

Nov 13

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-30
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-23	5-30
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

20 corruption cases against Hasina, ex-ministers likely

ZAYADUL AHSAN

The Bureau of Anti-corruption is likely to file 20 corruption cases against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and some ministers of her immediate-past Awami League government within two or three weeks, a top source in the bureau said.

The bureau has already completed primary investigation and the Prime Minister's Office has authorised it to begin secondary-level investigations against Hasina, Amir Hossain Amu, Shah AMS Kibria, Tofail Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, and Professor Rafiqul Islam, he added.

At this level, the bureau investigators would take statements of the accused and frame final charges of the 20 cases.

The bureau, placed under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), can neither begin investigation nor file cases against very important persons (VIPs) without the approval of the prime minister.

The primary investigation of the bureau is related to corruption in purchase of frigate, different power projects approved on supplier's credit

and different projects under the ministries of food, post and telecommunications and shipping.

In addition, the PMO is scrutinising documents to decide whether the government can file a corruption case as regards purchase of MiG-29s.

There is already a case against purchase of the MiG-29s in the High Court, which has given rise to some legal complications as to filing a corruption case in this regard.

The bureau will also seek the PM's approval to begin secondary investigation and file cases against former LGRD and co-operatives minister Zillur Rahman, state minister for shipping mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, state minister for jute AK Faizul Haq, and deputy LGRD minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

Besides, the bureau will also seek approval to file cases against two AL leaders and businessmen - Salman Rahman and Noor Ali.

Four taskforces of the bureau are working round the clock in this regard under the supervision of the new Director General AM Jabbar.

Immediately after coming to power, the BNP has taken the initiative to

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B Chy elected unopposed



Badruddoza Chowdhury, the 16th president-designate.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Professor AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury has been elected unopposed the 16th president of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Barrister Rowshan Ali, the other contender for presidency, pulled out of the race yesterday morning, the last date for withdrawal of candidature.

In the evening, Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed declared Chowdhury as the successor to President Shahabuddin Ahmad for a five-year term.

The new president is likely to take oath on Wednesday from Chief Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury at the Darbar Hall of the Bangabhaban, according to

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US plane crashes after take off in NY: Engine fell off?



PHOTOS: AFP

This television grab courtesy of WCBS via CNN shows smoke rising from the crash of an American Airlines 767 airliner (inset) yesterday. The plane crashed moments after take off from JFK airport in New York.

AP, New York

An American Airlines jetliner on its way to the Dominican Republic crashed moments after takeoff yesterday in a residential neighborhood eight kilometers from Kennedy Airport, authorities said. There was no immediate word on deaths or injuries.

The city was put on high alert, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said. Fighter jets were seen flying over the area.

Bill Schumann of the Federal Aviation Administration said there was no immediate indication of what caused the crash, which came two months after two hijacked airliners brought down the World Trade Center.

AFP says, eyewitness reports indicate an engine fell off the plane before it slammed into a New York residential area on shortly after takeoff, Mayor Rudy Giuliani said.

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Gas: Another assessment study at final stage

Startling facts on reserves likely

SHARIER KHAN

Another Bangladeshi gas resource assessment study being conducted jointly by the reputed Norway Petroleum Directorate and the Hydrocarbon Cell of Energy Ministry is nearing its final stage, sources said.

The findings of the study are likely to be startling as it incorporates gas reserve prospects in existing gasfields in the country. "The study is likely to be the basis for Petrobangla's plans to re-discover its gas producing fields. Large gasfields like Titas might actually have a lot of gas in their reserve which have not been estimated till date", a source said.

"This would mean many things for the country's energy sector. This would help us understand the

reserve and resource aspect of the much debated gas export issue.

"On the other hand, it would help us focus on existing gasfield development in a much more prudent way. It will also help us in taking a decision on conducting a new scientific study of the proven reserve in existing gasfields", he said.

However, sources claimed that though the study is of world class, the government is not giving it due importance. Top officials of the energy ministry who were supposed to conduct meetings regarding the study from first week of this month are avoiding it on various pretexts. The Norwegian company is frustrated due to lack of interest of high officials, the sources claimed.

The last scientific study on

proven gas reserve in the country was done in 1991. It is often argued now that the existing proven gas reserve of 11.23 tcf (which includes gas reserves added by international oil companies after mid-nineties) would be much higher if latest technologies including 3D surveys are used.

A higher quantum of proven reserve would minimise the need for costly oil and gas exploration by oil companies while the cost of gas production would reduce further, it is argued.

Sources close to this study are tight lipped about its preliminary outcome. "Necessary data have been collected and these are being fed to software with which the study group would analyse the gas

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AL unlikely to lend formal support to Nov 15 hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) is unlikely to lend formal support to the November 15 hartal, called by the Left Democratic Front (LDF), a conglomerate of seven left-leaning parties.

However, party insiders said, the AL supports the cause for which the LDF has issued the hartal call on November 5.

The hartal, to be the first since the installation of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's government on October 10, has been called in protest at the new government's move to export gas to India through pipeline and also its support to the US-led strike on Afghanistan.

The AL vehemently opposes any move towards gas export without keeping a 50-year reserve for

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Dhaka Test drawn: Teams off to Ctg

AL-AMIN

Bangladesh registered their first-ever draw by default after inclement weather ruled out the possibility of play on the final of the first Test against Zimbabwe at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on Monday.

The Test babes have suffered five consecutive defeats since joining the cricket fraternity last June.

Although the result was an achievement in itself, but the match would be best remembered for two 'cricket-less' days that robbed the visitors of a certain victory.

Bangladesh, trailing by 199 runs, were 125 for three at close on the third day in reply to a massive Zimbabwe first innings score of 431.

But the home side, who were shot out for 107 in the first innings, faced an innings defeat before the rain-gods came on the fourth day.

Match referee Hanumant Singh called off the match before lunch much to the disappointment of Zimbabwe captain Brian Murphy.

The Zimbabwe team had waited the whole morning for clear skies, but ironically the sun reappeared only after it was all over.

"Victory slipped through our grasp. But you can't do anything about weather. My teammates really played well and we deserved to win," said Murphy.

"We are now left with only one match to clinch the series. Let's hope that

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PHOTO: STAR

With the fifth and final day of the first Test against the hosts rained out, Zimbabwean all-rounder Heath Streak comes out of the Bangabandhu National Stadium to return to his hotel yesterday.