

Khaleda concerned at Gujarat violence

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has expressed deep concern over reported violence in India.

In a message sent to Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who is not attending the CHOGM, Khaleda said, "We understand your pain and concern following the reported incidents of violence and fervently hope that the people and the government of India would be able to address the challenges posed by this human tragedy."

Khaleda said the government of Bangladesh and she herself have been deeply concerned over the reported mindless act of violence in India.

Maj Gen (retd) Matin to head BAC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to appoint Major General Abdul Matin (retd) the new director general of the Bureau of Anti-corruption (BAC), sources said.

Prior to his retirement, Major General Matin served as the directorate general of the Forces Intelligence (DGFI).

Incumbent BAC DG M A Jabbar will be appointed the secretary of the social welfare ministry.

Meanwhile, retired Major General Azizur Rahman, who was appointed ambassador to Bahrain by the former AL government, has returned home after being recalled.

Major General Ashfaq Ahmed, GOC, Jessore Cantonment, has sent to New York to participate in the process of selection for his likely appointment as chief military observer in Georgia.

Contractor stabbed in city

UNB, Dhaka

A young contractor was critically injured as unknown assailants stabbed him near WASA staff quarters in the city's Kallyanpur area yesterday.

Medical sources said the victim Siraj, 27, son of Abul Hasem Hawlader, came under attack at about 3 pm while he was crossing road number-7 of the area.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where his condition is stated to be critical.

Kabul mission plan dropped

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has dropped a plan to open a resident diplomatic mission in Kabul, sources said.

Rather, it now wants to oversee developments in Afghanistan through any of its missions in Islamabad, New Delhi or Tashkent.

Foreign Secretary Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury talking to The Daily Star said: "A resident mission in Kabul is not in our mind now. We will operate there through a non-resident mission."

He however declined to name any particular country where the non-resident mission would be set up, but said it could operate from any of the neighbouring countries.

Besides having large missions in the Indian and Pakistani capitals, Dhaka also has a sizeable diplomatic presence in the Uzbekistan capital of Tashkent.

The opening of a fully-fledged embassy in Kabul received serious consideration following Bangladesh's keen interest in the reconstruction and rehabilitation process of the war-ravaged country.

Dhaka had ambassadorial representation in Kabul till late 1980s, when it closed its mission following the Soviet invasion and consequent destabilisation of the country.

However, many feel that absence of a mission in Kabul will discourage businessmen and NGO's in exploiting the opportunity of participating in the reconstruction process of Afghanistan.

Bangladesh has bright scope of exporting raw jute and jute products besides tea to Afghanistan.

Export of manpower for infrastructure building could also be prospective there, and a regular mission could have opened an entire window of opportunity, observers feel.

All 23 accused in ex-KCC mayor Bablu murder case acquitted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

All the 23 accused in ex-KCC deputy mayor Ikhtiaruddin Bablu murder case were acquitted by the Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court here yesterday.

After examining records and witnesses, Judge Mirza Mohammad Abdur Rouf acquitted the accused as he found them not guilty of murder.

Bablu was gunned down on August 22, 1997 near his residence at Banargati under Sonadanga thana.

A case was recorded the same day naming 22 persons and 25 unidentified others as accused by complainant Jahanara Begum, wife of slain Bablu.

The chargesheet was submitted to CMM's Court on December 31, 1997 accusing 24 persons.

One of 24 chargesheeted accused, identified as Manu Shaikh, was killed last year also in Banargati area.

Manu Sheikh was one of the masterminds behind the murder as learnt from the complainant. Twelve prosecution witnesses were cross-examined during the trial.

Nineteen accused were present in the court when judgement was delivered. Four accused were tried in absentia. They are notorious terrorists Asaduzzaman Litu, Mushfequr Rahman Hirok, Shah Alam and Rezaul Karim.

Asaduzzaman Litu and Mushfequr Rahman are also accused in Janakantha journalist Shamsur Rahman murder case.

Other accused are Elu, Dollar, Motalab, Asad, Halim, Abul Kashem, Alamgir, Harun-ar-Rashid, Rafique, Enamul, Lipu, Mastan Farid, Azhar, Shahadat, Nasiruddin Babu, Delwar, Rahim, ATM Arif and Moim.

"I shall appeal to higher court," said Jahanara Begum who has already received death threats from some of the acquitted accused.

Acid attack on poutra ward commissioner & his wife

BSS, Faridpur

Two persons of Nagarkanda Upazila received acid burn injuries Wednesday night at their residence at upazila headquarters.

According to Faridpur Medical College Hospital sources, Nagarkanda pourasava's Ward Commissioner Yunus Molla, 40, and his wife Rahela Begum, 32, received acid-burn injury when some miscreants attacked their house at night.

According to injured Commissioner, a group of miscreants allegedly led by one Alimuzzaman Selu, set fire on his house. At this time Yunus Molla and his wife came out of his room and were attacked by the miscreants who poured acid on their bodies.

They were admitted into Faridpur Medical College Hospital yesterday morning. Senior police officers of the district visited the victims at the hospital.

Next hearing on graft cases against Altaf Hossain Chy on April 15

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Special Court for Dhaka Division yesterday adjourned the hearing on three graft cases against Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury until April 15.

Judge Mohammad M A Shahidur Rahman adjourned the hearing following time petitions by the defence lawyers.

Advocate Masud Ahmed Talukder submitted three separate petitions, seeking adjournment of the hearing. He stated that Altaf Hossain Chowdhury could not appear in the court due to pre-occupations.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Feat extraordinary...a dog of the army dog squad negotiates an iron ring with a national flag in its mouth in rehearsal for the inaugural session of the seventh Bangladesh Games at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

AL again calls for CEC's quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) in an emergency meeting yesterday once again demanded immediate resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) M ASyed.

Held at party central office in the city with AL president Sheikh Hasina in the chair, the meeting resolved not to participate in any elections under the current CEC as "he had lost his credibility" during the October 1, 2001 polls.

The resolution also warned the government against killings, coups, repression and conflict.

The decision came at a time when the Election Commission is planning to announce schedules for election to three city corporations in Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna, and also amidst growing concern over nighttime surveillance around Sheikh Hasina's Dhanmondi residence and raids on the houses of her security personnel.

The meeting decided that AL central leaders would embark upon a cross-country organisational tour

programme throughout March to build up public resistance against "unabated oppression and terrorism in the country." Hasina would initiate the tour programme by visiting some northern districts including Rajshahi and Rangpur from March 2 through 5.

Due to prolonged Eid vacationing, many of the 67 ALCWC members however could not come to the meeting that began at around 4:30pm and continued till 8:30pm, party sources said.

Issues about joining the parliament and the forthcoming city corporation election were however not discussed, party general secretary Zillur Rahman told reporters.

Referring to yesterday's arrest of Bahauddin Nasim, a political aide to Sheikh Hasina, the AL chief's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury said the government had shifted its focus from the countryside to Dhaka, oppressing AL leaders and workers at the central level now.

"So far they (the government) repressed our

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Contracts signed for development of 5 feeder roads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) recently signed six contracts involving Tk 98 crore with private companies for development of five feeder roads in western and south-western districts.

A total of 113.75 km feeder roads in Pirojpur, Kushtia, Chuadanga, Shariatpur and Pabna will be developed under the programme. The work will be completed in 21 months, according to the contracts.

This is the second phase of the Third Road Rehabilitation and Maintenance Project (RRMP-III) involving Tk 470 crore. The World Bank will bear 60 per cent cost of the project.

Two more contracts for development of 48 km roads at a cost of Tk 46 crore in the same region are under process, sources said.

Schoolgirl abducted in Magura

UNB, Magura

A schoolgirl was kidnapped at gunpoint from her house at village Srirampur in Sadar upazila on Wednesday night.

Police said the terrorists of the village, Zihad and Sajal, stormed into the house of Arun Kumar Biswas at 11 pm and abducted his 14-year old daughter.

A case was filed under Woman and Child Repression (Prevention) Act.

Trans-Myanmar-Bangladesh gas pipeline plan by local co

STAR REPORT

The "Trans-Myanmar-Bangladesh Gas Pipeline" project, proposed by 'an international consortium', is actually the proposal made by Bangladeshi company Mohona Holding Ltd three years ago.

The proposal was made in mid-'99, coinciding with US company Unocal's unofficial advocacy for gas export from Bangladesh to India and a visit by the then foreign minister of Myanmar to Bangladesh.

However, the proposal mysteriously became 'dead' within months, even before any meaningful negotiation or discussion with the government.

Industry insiders said the company has revived the proposal again now, coinciding with the visit of Unocal's regional chief to Bangladesh.

Few months ago, Unocal officially proposed to the government for export of gas from Bibiyana gas field to

India.

According to sources, the Trans-Myanmar-Bangladesh Gas Pipeline project proposal lacks any feasibility study, and available information on gas resources shows no scope for export of gas from Myanmar to India. The only surplus gas in Myanmar is being produced by Unocal, and the company is committed to supply that to Thailand for power generation.

The proposal also claims to add gas to its pipeline from India's Tripura region, where large-scale gas production remained uncertain for years due to insurgency.

Besides, the pipeline infrastructure will require investment of over two billion dollars. But Mohona Holdings does not have any expertise or investment in this regard. Its only partner in the deal is Indian oil com

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Mar 1		6-01 pm
Mar 2	6-20 am	

Prayer Timings		
Mar 1		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-00
Juma	12-15	1-20
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-05	6-10
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation