### PM tells JS **Duty free access** of goods to India not linked with transit, gas export

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday categorically said there is no link of the proposed duty-free access of Bangladeshi products to Indian market with transit and export of gas to India

In reply to a question of Jamaat member Shah Mohammad Ruhul Quddus during the PM's question time, she told parliament that the government would take decision on gas export after assessing its reserve and domestic requirements and after discussing the issue in parliament and with the people.

The Prime Minister said the government is holding discussions with India and Pakistan to get dutyfree access for 25 categories of Bangladeshi exports to the Indian market and 21 categories to Pakistan market, as per SAPTA provision.

She referred to her talks with Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vaipavee in Kathmandu on the sidelines of the SAARC summit in January and with the Indian PM's SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

# Two kidnapped, murdered in Fatikchhari

### BSS, Ctg

Two young men were kidnapped and killed by terrorists in two separate incidents on Tuesday and Monday under Fatikchhari thana in the district, police control room said last night.

Police arrested two persons in this connection.

The dead were identified as Obidul Hag, 28, son of late Shamsul Alam of Rosangiri area and Faruk Ahmad Babul, 27, of Lelang village.

Police said political feuds might be the reason behind the killing. They suspect local BCL activists are behind the abduction and killings but could not confirm the political identity of the victims.

District Additional Superintendent of Police (North) Auranghajeb Mahbub quoting local sources said Mugabe declared the abductors and killers might be the members of Toyeb-Osman group.

Obidul Hag and his friend Titu were kidnapped from a restaurant at

# 'Greater understanding must to defeat global terrorism'

#### DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday felt there was need for greater promotion of dialogue and understanding between diverse nations and peoples and races to defeat global terrorism.

Several speakers and scholars from home and abroad participated in the two-day seminar on "Post September 11: Challenges and Opportunities".

It was co-organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) and the American Center of the US Embassy in Dhaka at the BIISS conference centre.

Inaugurating the seminar, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said the world will be a better place to live in if "tolerance, democratic ideals, justice and equity are accepted and upheld accepting the diversity of people, races and societies"

"We have seen to our utter horror how chaos in one part of the world can undermine security in another part of the world."

US Ambassador Mary Ann Peters, speaking as special guest, said September 11 has changed the US

#### society in many ways

"A significant number of Americans of all religions, including Muslims, have rediscovered their faith.'

She observed although the US is, and had always been, essentially "one nation under God" a reinvigorated embrace of religion and religious values within the US society is a positive and unforeseen outcome of September 11.

"In the US after the aftermath of September 11, various groups have reached out to the Islamic population in the US in friendship, compassion and cooperation out of a conviction that were we to allow the terrorists of September 11 to divide us, then one of their important goals would have been achieved.

Peters said," Bangladesh and other countries have paid a price for September 11. In addition to Bangladesh and Bangladeshi-American victims, whose loss of life we mourn, the economy of Bangladesh has been adversely affected as markets for Bangladeshi exports have softened. Orders have been put on hold."

Yesterday's seminar was divided into two sessions. The first session was on "An Ethical Society" which

# Hasina to visit **5 districts** March 17-23

### UNB, Dhaka

Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina will make a seven-day tour of Gopalganj, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Khulna and Jessore districts from March 17-23.

Hasina will offer fateha at the mazar of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara and inaugurate a children's rally there on March 17. She will attend a party meeting in Gopalganj on March 18.

After staying two days at her ancestral home, Hasina will address a workers' rally at Bagerhat and visit the house of slain journalist Harunur-Rashid on March 21. She will address another party meeting at

Satkhira on the same day. On the following day, Hasina will SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition in Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina speaks at the concluding session of 46th convention of the Engineers' Institution, Bangladesh, yesterday,

# Hasina for developing Floating hospital for the rural poor gas-based industries

Lifebuoy Friendship Hospital, a major initiative of Lever Brothers. was inaugurated yesterday.

The hospital has launched an extensive programme to provide healthcare services to the poor, especially those living on the remote offshore islands, riverbanks and sandbanks (chars).

President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury inaugurated the bargemounted hospital on the Shitalakhya River near Godanail in Narayanganj

The self-propelled hospital is designed to bring the healthcare services to the poorest of the poor who cannot afford expensive treatment or to those who need to travel several miles to reach a medical centre

Each year, about 30,000 people are expected to receive services under the hospital's promotional, preventive and curative healthcare services The double-decked hospital

with 38.5 metres in length and 5.05 SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

**Daily Star's health** insurance for its staff

# STAFF CORRESPONDENT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criticising the alleged government move for gas export, opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday said building a gas pipeline network across the country and developing gas-based industries will create "permanent sources of national income".

"We will not earn much by onetime sale of gas abroad

"So long we can ensure proper utilistion of our gas resources in the country, foreign investment in industries will continue to flow in", the Awami League president and former prime minister said.

She was addressing as chief guest the concluding session of the

46th Convention of Engineers' Institution, Bangladesh, held on its premises in the city.

She urged engineers to develop homegrown technologies to help best use of country's gas resources locally.

Terming technological advancement a prerequisite to national development, she regretted that some of her government's initiatives for development of science and technology, including a novo-theatre project, have been suspended by the BNP-Jamaat government.

She criticised the ruling alliance for what she said its "superstitious attitude'

Technological development is not possible in absence of demo-

# Tax evasion charges against cement co

cratic atmosphere and rule of law

But the ruling alliance is destroying

democracy and creating a law and

order situation by letting loose

repression on opposition political

activists and minority community,

she alleged. "They have resorted to

She claimed that her government

had presented good governance to

the nation, but this is being shattered

UNB adds: The Awami League

president said in the administration

repression is going on through

harassment transfer, forcible dis-

missal as well as politicisation and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Awami League cleansing in the style

of ethnic cleansing"

### RAFIQ HASAN

The Confidence Cement Ltd has allegedly evaded around Tk 9 crore in value added tax (VAT) during the last two years by hiding information about its production and supply of products.

The company allegedly evaded Tk 6.31 crore in VAT and illegally took exemption of Tk 2.52 crore in tax during the period, a recent investigation into the accounts of the company by the customs, excise and VAT authorities revealed However, the Confidence Cement denied the allegations and termed the investigation report 'false and fabricated'.



President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury poses with officials of Lever Brothers and other guests in front of the bargemounted Lifebuoy Friendship Hospital on the Shitalakhya river in Narayanganj yesterday.

# SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

area at midnight SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

### Tendons of JCD leader severed at Tejgaon STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hoodlums severed tendons of hands and legs of a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader at a government office near Tejgaon police station and stabbed him indiscriminately yesterday afternoon.

The gang led by Kalam, Abul and Syamol dragged Saiful Islam Dipu, 30, to a government office near Tejgaon Police station and severed tendons of his hands and legs. The gang also stabbed him indiscriminately in different parts of his body. They fled the scene, leaving Dipu critically injured.

He was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and later shifted to the Pangu (Orthopaedic) Hospital.

Dipu is a joint convener of Tejgaon thana unit of JCD. The reason behind the attack could not be known immediately.

# re-elected in tainted election

### AP, Harare

The government declared President Robert Mugabe the winner of Zimbabwe's most bitter presidential election vesterday in a vote observers said was marred by irregularities and ruling party violence.

Mugabe defeated former labour leader Morgan Tsvangirai, who presented the first real electoral challenge to the president since he led Zimbabwe to independence 22 years ago.

With 100 per cent of districts reporting final results, Mugabe had about  $54\,$ per cent of the votes, while Tsvangirai had 40 per cent, government officials said. State radio said there were 1,685,212 votes for Mugabe and 1,258,401 for Tsvangirai. Election officials said 3,130,913 people voted out of 5.647.812 registered.

"We hereby declare Robert Gabrielle Mugabe has received the majority of votes cast, said Tobaiwa Mudede, the registrar-general of the state electoral directorate.

The opposition Movement for Democratic Change rejected the "unofficial" results.

"It is the biggest electoral fraud I have ever witnessed in my life," Tsvangirai told a press conference yesterday. The election "does not reflect the true will of the people of Zimbabwe and is consequently illegitimate in the eyes of the people.

The election was considered a crucial test for democracy in this southern African nation, but independent observers questioned its validity. They said it was tainted by violence, intimidation, confusion and the disenfranchisement of thousands of voters in the opposition stronghold of Harare.

"The presidential elections failed to meet key, broadly accepted criteria SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

### on Nasim at **Dhaka Cantt**

Wife alleges

brutal torture

### UNB, Dhaka

Dr Sultana Shamima Chowdhury Rita, wife of Bahauddin Nasim, who met her husband yesterday in the central jail said he was brutally tortured at Dhaka Cantonment.

"I found marks of inhuman torture in his body, eyes, hands and legs. He was given electric shock in his ears and fingers. He cannot walk properly. His eyes are red and there is a black spot in one eye," Rita told UNB.

Nasim, special aide of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, was arrested from Zia International Airport on the eve of departure for USA on the night of Feb 28.

He was taken to custody on charge of possessing unauthorised US dollars and attacking the motorcade of Khaleda Zia in Madaripur in June last year. Later. on March 11. a sedition case was filed accusing Nasim of engaging in anti-state activities

Jail sources said medical team checked Nasim after his wife met him in the jail. His counsel Barrister SEE PAGE 11 COL 7 newspaper where it is today.



The management of The Daily Star has introduced health insurance for members of the staff and their spouses

This was announced by Editor of the newspaper Mahfuz Anam at a general meeting of the staff yesterdav.

This major health insurance scheme is the first of its kind in newspaper industry in the country. Under the scheme, each staff

member and his or her spouse will get up to Tk 45,000 in case of hospitalisation for treatment and childbirth. It will be effective from the

coming Independence Day. There are eight enlisted hospitals under the insurance scheme. But insurance benefits will also be available in case of treatment in other hospitals.

While announcing the new

scheme, the Editor thanked the staff

members of The Daily Star for their

commitment to the profession,

devotion to duty and love for the

organisation. He said he is proud of

his colleagues and hoped that they

would continue to uphold their

Directors of the Mediaworld Ltd whose

vision and far sightedness brought the

He paid tributes to the Board of

tradition.

Tejgaon area last night. Parvez Lablu, 28, son of Salauddin, was shot at about 7:30 pm. He was immediately taken to

Alleged

terrorist

shot dead

in the city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

the Dhaka medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the attending doctors declared him dead.

An alleged terrorist was shot dead

by his gang members following

internal feud in front of Mahila

College at Tejkunibazar in the city's

Sources said Parvez was brother-in-law of terrorist Picchi Hannan. He was arrested by police and released on bail only four days ago. The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately.

No case was filed with Tejgaon Police Station till 10 pm yesterday.

The investigation team asked the relevant department to collect a total of Tk 8.85 crore including the 'evaded amount' and the exempted tax from the company

"The investigators do not know the VAT rules and did not try to understand our points," said Aslam Chowdhury, general manger of Confidence Cement, over telephone.

He claimed that the company had had all its transactions clean and transparent and the charges of tax evasion do not arise as the goods in question were supplied to the Export Processing Zones (EPZ) as deemed export.

The two units of the company 'exported' 8,403 metric tones and 14,721

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Agitated students of Khulna University set a passenger bus afire following an accident on Khulna-Satkhira road Tuesday night in which Prof Biswas Ranjit of the university (inset) was injured seriously.

Transport strike in south western zone

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Transport services on all the routes of south-western zone of the country have been suspended for an indefinite period protesting damage of passenger buses and trucks by the students of Khulna University on Tuesday night.

Students of the university went on the rampage following a road accident on Khulna-Satkhira road in which Prof. Biswas Ranjit Kumar, 40, of Business Administration discipline was seriously injured. Prof. Ranjit was admitted to KMCH and later shifted to DMCH as his condition deteriorated.

The agitated students also torched a passenger bus. SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

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