

## Shaheed Zia Smriti Complex to be built at Kalurghat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to build Shaheed Zia Smriti Complex on 23.60 acres of land at Kalurghat Betar Kendra in Chittagong.

An inter-ministerial meeting yesterday took the decision and formed a seven-member committee headed by State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Redwan Ahmed, according to a press release by the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs.

The construction of the complex will start from next financial year.

The meeting was held at the conference room of the cabinet

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## 10 pc duty cut on rice import

RAFIQ HASAN

The government yesterday withdrew the 10 per cent regulatory duty on import of rice to increase supply in the market.

A Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) in this regard became effective yesterday.

The duty was imposed during the tenure of the last caretaker government to discourage rice import following bumper production of rice.

After the withdrawal, the duty on rice import is 33 per cent including 25 per cent customs duty.

An inter-ministerial meeting at the ministry of food on April 1 had recommended withdrawal of the regulatory duty following sudden increase in prices of rice in retail markets. NBR officials now think the supply will increase and prices stabilise.

In February, the government lowered the LC margin for rice import to 25 per cent from 100 per cent to increase import by private sector importers.

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So now it's poverty reduction. Is it? Column: Between Yourself and Me KSA Murshid

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SAARC adopts 16-point plan to fight poverty

OPEC sees no urgency of output hike after Iraqi suspension

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Apr 10		6-18 pm
Apr 11	5-41 am	

Prayer Timings		
Apr 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15
Source: Islamic Foundation		

# Trade talks inconclusive, roll into third day

INAM AHMED and SHAHRIAR KARIM

Nine hours of nerve-tingling trade talks, punctuated by stubborn stances and walkouts, ended inconclusively yesterday with both Indian and Bangladeshi sides still far from agreeing on some vital issues.

The negotiators are set to sit again this morning on an unscheduled extended session with both sides touting their joint declarations. But if the last midnight developments are anything to go by, Dhaka and New Delhi are unlikely to soften their rigid stances, meeting sources said.

Earlier, both sides seemed to have edged towards a settlement in the two-day talks, with the Indians 'agreeing' to allow free access to 16-category Bangladeshi items and Bangladesh finding no problem in lifting its ban on the import of sugar and yarn from India through land ports. Delhi said it would come up with the list of specific items at today's morning session.

Delhi also wanted Dhaka to commit on the transit or transshipment facility. But Bangladesh said this along with all other non-trade issues should be discussed at the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) meeting. And a JEC committee will look into these matters.

But things took a different twist at the dinner table last night when the Indians said a declaration on transit or transshipment must come at today's meeting if there were to be any agreement. It also wanted a 'satisfactory resolution' for opening of the land ports. But Dhaka found that transit or transshipment is an issue that also involves the foreign ministry and the opening of the land ports is the finance ministry's concerns.

As such, both sides are learnt to have the propositions 'unacceptable'. However, today's session will have the final say.

Meantime, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury left for Thimpu to attend a meeting of the South Asian Federation of Exchanges (SAFE). Prior to his departure, he is said to have advised the Bangladeshi negotiators to try their best to 'cut an amicable deal'.

Earlier, after the first day's tumultuous session that even threatened a premature end to the talks, the negotiators met half an hour behind schedule yesterday at 10:30am. But only 30 minutes into the meeting, the talks broke down.

Trade negotiators of the two countries had been able to agree on some

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# JS passes new law to curb crimes

NAZMUL ASHRAF

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed a stringent law to be in force for two years to help the government to clamp down especially on street crimes amidst walkouts by some opposition lawmakers.

Immediately afterwards, legislators of the main opposition Awami League that has continued staying off the present parliament since the very first day staged demonstrations at the parliament building corridors. They condemned the new law as 'black and anti-people'.

Styled as "Law and Order

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## Salient features

- \* Effective for 2 years from date of enactment.
- \* Deals with crimes relating to terrorism, snatching, extortion, obstruction to tender dropping and movement of vehicles, ransom and damaging vehicles.
- \* Punishment with 2-5 years imprisonment along with fines.
- \* Trial within 30 days of submitting charge sheet if an accused caught red-handed by police or anybody. Charge sheet within seven days in case caught red-handed.
- \* If not caught red-handed trial within 60 days.
- \* Considering videotapes, still photographs and discs as evidences.
- \* Bail on satisfaction of the court or appeal court.
- \* 2-5 years imprisonment for filing a false case.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League leaders demonstrate against passage of Law and Order Disruption Crimes (Speedy Trial) Bill, 2002 at the Jatiya Sangsad complex yesterday.

## AL lawmakers protest at JS complex

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League lawmakers staged a demonstration in the Jatiya Sangsad complex yesterday protesting passage of the Law and Order Disruption (Speedy Trial) Act 2002, terming it a "black law".

The AL Parliamentary Party reviewed the Act at a meeting and then the lawmakers came out of the parliament building at about 8.30 pm immediately after passage of the bill, chanting anti-government slogans. Over 35 lawmakers took part in the demonstration at the main gate.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman said AL along with other parties will launch a countrywide movement against the government. "It (the Act) is politically motivated and designed to cleanse the opposi

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## New law to eliminate AL, says Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition leader and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government enacted the 'Law and Order Disruption Crimes (speedy trial) Act' to launch an 'Awami League cleansing operation.'

Giving her reaction to the new stringent law at her Dhanmondi residence last night, Hasina said, "This is enacted to victimise political opponents. First, they (the government) had repressed our leaders and workers, then they grabbed their property and raped the women, and then they sacked pro-opposition public servants. Now, they are ready to launch an Awami League cleansing operation under cover of the law."

"The government wants to establish a single-party rule and eliminate the opposition," she added.

Replying to a query, the former prime minister said, "We may go for legal battle against this black law, but I don't know whether we'll get justice."

She was critical of the provision for summary trial under the new law and feared that this would hinder people's right to justice.

"Had the government been really serious about curbing terrorism then why had it nominated criminals for ward commissioner posts in the city corporations," asked Hasina.

Hasina was highly critical of the government and the Election Commission for what she dubbed as their indifference to the criminal candidates.

While giving examples of repression and attacks on political opponents,

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## Mob kills alleged mugger in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged mugger was killed in mob-execution in the city's Kotwali area yesterday morning.

The on-duty doctors at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital declared Mohammad Ejaj dead on arrival.

Also injured was Sirajul Islam who was taken to the Kotwali Police Station after being treated at the hospital.

Both muggers were caught mugging some pedestrians at the Tantibazar intersection at about 6:35am.

The local people with the help of the pedestrians chased two muggers down, while the other managed to flee.

The angry mob beat them up before a police team came to their rescue. Police seized three crackers from the muggers. A case was filed with Kotwali Police Station.

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## Commentary

# Where are our leaders leading us to?

## Part 3: Taliban in Bangladesh?

MAHFUZ ANAM

WE have many reasons for our umbrage at the FEER (Far Eastern Economic Review) article, *Beware of Bangladesh*. After a bloodletting Liberation War and nearly two decades of military and quasi-military rule we re-established democracy more than a decade ago. We have maintained a steady growth of above five per cent, made significant progress in mass education, especially girls', and through the work of the NGOs have somewhat advanced the lot of rural women. Work of Grameen Bank, BRAC, Proshika, ASA and many other smaller organisations have contributed significantly to our progress. We, more than anybody else, are aware that we have "miles to go before we sleep" and that there are enormous challenges that lie before us.

At the very moment when some of our major achievements face a slump in global demand - like our RMG sector in the post-September world - and a hostile West against Muslim countries suspected to have links with global terrorism, we are suddenly being burdened with a fundamentalist image that can easily make us a pariah state in the context of the present world. When

the US is waging a war against terrorism, which essentially means against the Taliban in Afghanistan and against a select number of Muslim countries, for anybody to link us with them is nothing short of an attempt to subvert our steady march forward. Hence the near universal condemnation of the FEER piece which, as an editor I feel, is a slur on serious journalism. Our disappointment grew further when the same piece was reproduced in the Asian Wall Street Journal, which is done very rarely.

While we disdainfully reject the FEER article, we must also point out that our reaction to it is also immature. Banning the issue was a farce because anyone can, and everyone interested did, access it on the Internet and much of its content has already been published in some of the national dailies. Trying to sue the journal for a billion dollars will only make us spend so much money in a legal process, which is unclear and vaguely charted. The best response can be and is being given by the free media of Bangladesh, who in unison have condemned the piece as journalism at its worst.

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## Alamgir shown arrested in sedition case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Ramna police yesterday took the sedition case against former state minister for planning Dr. Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and six other former bureaucrats, as a regular case.

Dr Khan was shown arrested in the case.

The officer-in-charge (OC) of Ramna thana sent the case to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka the same day.

After hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shafiq Anwar fixed May 9 for next hearing on the case.

The OC filed the case with the CMM's Court on Monday against Dr. Khan and six others accusing them of 'instigating' government officials and employees to join the agitation led from the Janata Mancha (people's dais) in the city during the rule of the then BNP government in 1996.

Alamgir was arrested from Zia International Airport on March 15 on his return from Singapore.

Later, he was shown arrested under Section 54 of the CrPC.

## Israel quits 2 West Bank towns

### More areas invaded, battle in Jenin rages on

AFP, AP, Nablus

Under heavy US pressure, Israel withdrew yesterday from two Palestinian town, but soldiers invaded other areas of the West Bank and fought dozens of beleaguered gunmen in refugee camp in what was emerging as the deadliest battle of the 12-day military offensive.

Israeli public radio, quoting security sources, said hundreds of fighters in the Jenin camp - compared in the Israeli press to the legendary Jewish resistance at Masada against the Romans - were confined to a tiny area measuring just 70 metres by 70 metres.

The radical Islamic Jihad's Jenin chief, Mahmud Tawalbeh, who was freed from the town's prison in February by an armed Palestinian mob, led them, it added.

The hard core of Palestinians are expected to fight to the death, and were setting off explosive charges of around 100 kilos (220 pounds) against the slowly encroaching Israeli forces, the radio said.

An Israeli Foreign Ministry

spokesman, Ofer Gendelman, told the BBC that 10 Israeli soldiers had been killed in the past 24 hours.

Residents contacted by phone said Israeli army bulldozers had razed dozens of houses to open up roads for their armoured personnel carriers in the cramped streets of the camp, long seen as a hotbed of militants by Israel.

They said those who refused to quit their condemned homes were buried by the bulldozers, and warned the death toll could be very high when rescue services are finally allowed in.

In Doha, the Arab satellite television channel Al-Jazeera said 11 Israeli soldiers had been killed in overnight combat, nine of them in Jenin, although under Israel's strict military censorship the reports could not be immediately verified.

Palestinian officials said Israel had appealed to the Palestinian leadership for a truce in the battle-scarred camp to evacuate the dead and wounded, but had been told to address itself to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, pinned down by the army in his Ramallah offices.

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