

Musharraf for 'unconditional' talks, Vajpayee unmoved

Putin to mediate in Almaty today, Jiang may talk with 2 rivals

REUTERS, Almaty

Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf offered yesterday to hold "unconditional" talks with India's prime minister to resolve the tense military standoff between the two nuclear-armed rivals.

He also welcomed moves by Russian President Vladimir Putin, who meets both Musharraf and Indian leader Atal Behari Vajpayee today, to mediate between them.

Editorial on page 4

But Vajpayee, demanding an end to cross-border raids by Islamic militants, has so far ruled out a face-to-face meeting during a 16-nation Asian security summit in Kazakhstan.

India and Pakistan have massed about a million troops along their border since a December attack on the Indian parliament which New



PHOTO: AFP

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee (L) is welcomed by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev while Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf walks with Kazakh Foreign Minister Kasymzhumar Tokayev, upon their arrival in Almaty yesterday for talks.

FM returns home ending 3-nation trip

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan returned home yesterday ending his three-week trip that took him to Botswana, United States and Canada.

At the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group held in Kesane in Botswana, he played the role of moderator in all the deliberations, which were instrumental in shaping the Group's response on the countries' situation under discussion.

In the United States, the foreign minister had a busy schedule in Washington where he had an official meeting with the US Secretary of State Colin Powell.

He also met the National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Deputy Secretary of Treasury Kenneth Dam,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Slipping thru' loops

Law enforcers get away after extra-judicial killings

SHAIKH NAZRUL ISLAM

At least five people died due to torture by the law enforcers in and around the city since April 20 but the culprits are slipping through the loopholes of law.

No formal charges could even be pressed against those responsible for these tragic deaths. The reason is that either the family members of the victims were threatened to withdraw the cases or the autopsy reports were 'tampered'.

The latest such brutality took place in the capital's Labagh area on Friday. A Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) team picked up a fish trader, Mohammad Sohel, 20, and allegedly tortured him. He died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) next day.

The BDR team picked up Sohel on the basis of a list prepared by several relevant agencies. Sources said the victim was not the man the team looked for. They beat him causing fatal injuries and left him on the verandah of the Labagh Police Station building Saturday morning, giving no documents to the police.

Members of the team did not have any name tag. The victim was admitted to the DMCH where he died in the evening.

Despite request from the police, the BDR men did not give any documents. But the next day they came and claimed that the man was kept on the first floor of the police station building. He jumped down from there and died later, they said.

Police have no list which showed that Sohel was a criminal.

In another incident, Mohammad Badal, 19, a butcher by profession, was picked up by Narayanganj DB police from his house without any warrant of arrest on May 7, suspecting his involvement in the rape and killing of a girl.

Later Sub-inspector Azharul Islam allegedly told Badal's family to pay Tk 50,000 for his release. The family members failed to pay the money and he was tortured in front of them.

In a critical condition, he was produced before court and then sent to Narayanganj jail. He was shifted to Dhaka Central jail on May 17 later, he was admitted to the DMCH where he died the same day.

The victim's mother filed a murder case with a

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Judgement in Rubel murder case June 17

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday fixed June 17 for judgement in the sensational Shamim Reza Rubel Murder Case.

After completion of hearing on arguments in the case, judge Mollah Mostafa Kamal fixed the date for judgement.

The hearing of arguments began at the same court on April 16. Earlier, 35 out of 62 prosecution witnesses were cross-examined.

The trial of the case began in the court on July 27, 1999.

The court framed charges against the 14 accused including AC Akram Hussain and Mukuli Begum, a local Awami League leader, on May 10, 1999.

Shamim Reza Rubel, 24, a BBA student of the Independent University, was picked up by a team of DB police from in front of his Siddeswari residence on July 23, 1998 and was allegedly tortured to death in the custody the same day.

The victim's father Abdur Rouf

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

3 kidnapped schoolboys rescued in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Three kidnapped schoolboys were rescued by police yesterday noon in the city.

The schoolboys have been identified as SM Imran Hossain, Zubair Hossain and Salman Anam. All of them are students of class four of Khulna Zilla School.

Imran and Salman are sons of businessman Alamgir Hossain of West Baniakhmar Hajibari, while Zubair is the son of another businessman Ikhtiaruddin of the same area.

Sources said the boys were returning home from school at around 12:00 noon by rickshaw when five masked men stopped the rickshaw and kidnapped them at gunpoint. They were taken to an abandoned house at Altapole Lane,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina consoles wounded journalist Syed Nazmul Alam of Kushtia at the Orthopaedic (Pangu) Hospital in the city yesterday.

No atmosphere for joining JS: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina yesterday again said the absence of a congenial climate in and outside the parliament holds back her party from joining it.

Hasina questioned the efficacy of sitting in a parliament that, she alleged, came through an election heavily rigged for installing the BNP-Jamaat alliance in power.

The ex-premier, who has been staying off this House along with her deputies since day one, made the remarks just a day before the Jatiya Sangsad goes into session today for the national budget for the fiscal 2002-2003.

"We never said we would not join parliament. But what is the guarantee that violence would not take place within the House. Through a study report, we have shown how the alliance had rigged the election," Hasina told reporters after visiting a

mauled newsmen.

Syed Nazmul Imam, Kushtia correspondent of the Dainik Manavzamin who was seriously injured in an attack, is undergoing treatment at the Orthopaedic Hospital in the capital.

Unidentified gangsters beat up Nazmul Imam and stabbed him indiscriminately on the night of May 28 while he was returning home from his office by rickshaw.

Mentioning repression on some 200 journalists after the alliance's assumption of power, including the killing of Harunur Rashid of Khulna, Hasina said that anarchy was reigning high in the country.

As the alliance has a two-thirds majority in parliament, the Awami League chief said they can do anything they wish. "Their seven-month rule has already exposed their failure to run the country."

Hasina observed that journalists are scared of performing their job

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

AL leader shot dead, house of another ransacked in Barisal

UNB, Barisal

An Awami League leader was shot dead at Pashchim Chechri village in Kathalia upazila of Jhalakati district early yesterday.

Police said unidentified gunmen broke into the house of Monoj Das, 45, president of Koikhali ward unit of Awami League and a teacher by profession shortly after midnight and sprayed bullets on him while he was asleep.

Monoj was rushed to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The reason behind the killing could not be known. A case was filed.

Our Staff Correspondent from Barisal adds: Unidentified miscreants attacked and ransacked the house of another AL leader in Barisal town yesterday morning.

According to police, five miscreants

SEE PAGE 11 COL



An appeal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Ariful Islam Shawon, a second-year student of Physics Department of Dhaka University is suffering from blood cancer.

He needs medical treatment in Singapore, which would cost around Tk 45 to 50 lakhs.

Shawon's father, a retired government employee, is not in a position to bear such a huge expense. So, we request affluent individuals, benevolent organizations as well as people from all walks of life to help Shawon financially.

In recent years, many seriously ill persons have been saved by people's generous efforts. With all our abilities combined, can't we save Shawon and bring him back to normal life?

You can contribute in the following accounts:

Md Ariful Islam, S.B. No. 6937-3, Agrani Bank, Dhaka University Branch, Dhaka

Md. Ariful Islam, S.B. No. 4980, Pubali Bank, Mogh Bazar Branch, Dhaka.

Md Ariful Islam, S.B. No. 5091, Uttara Bank, Corporate Branch, Motijheel, Dhaka.

He also joins Shawon's family in their effort to save him. We urge our readers to come forward to save Shawan's life.

Strange revenge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

An armed group said to be BNP activists looked for a local Awami League (AL) worker at his house, and failing to get him cut off a lock of his wife's hair.

The incident took place at village Udhunpara in Lalpur upazila on

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Promotion after a long delay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a long delay, six senior assistant chiefs of the economic cadre were promoted to the post of deputy chief yesterday.

Earlier, the departmental promotion committee in a meeting on May 5 this year recommended their upgrading.

The promotees include two officers who were directly recruited into the economic cadre. They are S M Basim Uddin and Abdur Razzak. The other promotees are Md Rafiqul Islam, Rokeya Begum, Monowara Begum and Md Yakub Ali.

The delay in promotion in the economic cadre had given rise to frustration among the officials. Right now, two posts of chief, 14 of joint chief and 22 of deputy chief have been lying vacant for long.

Bangladeshis get 6 months to prove skill in Malaysia

RAFIQ HASAN

Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia, whose work permit expired recently, would have to go through examinations to prove their efficiency for an extension.

Work permits of 70,000 Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia expired recently.

According to sources in the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, Malaysia has agreed to retain Bangladeshi workers who prove efficient or have attained some technical knowledge.

Workers without prior job confirmation, and those who fail to attain decent efficiency levels in any sector, will have to leave Malaysia.

The Malaysian government first declined to extend their work permit for Bangladeshi workers but later revoked the decision following a request from the Bangladesh government, sources said.

State Minister for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Mohammad Quamrul Islam hoped that most Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia would get extensions as they have shown efficiency in various sectors. Only 10 per cent workers may be deported in phases.

During 1996-97, five lakh Bangladeshi workers went to Malaysia. Most of them returned

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Eight killed as buses collide in Chandina

4 killed in Tangail, 2 in Bagerhat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fourteen people were killed and 75 injured in separate road accidents in Comilla, Tangail and Bagerhat yesterday.

Eight people including two women and a child were killed and 20 injured in an accident on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in Chandina upazila of Comilla district.

Police said the accident took place when a Dhaka-bound passenger bus of 'Bilash Paribahan' from Chandpur collided with a Noakhali-bound microbus at about 3:15 pm at Noritala area under Chandina upazila.

Six microbus passengers died on the spot while two succumbed to

their injuries on way to hospital, police said.

Identity of seven victims could not be known immediately but one of the dead was identified as Habil Mia, 70.

A case was filed with Chandina police. Police seized the bus but the driver managed to escape.

At least four people were killed and 15 seriously injured in a truck accident at Khudirunpur in the Sadar upazila of Tangail yesterday morning.

The dead were identified as Aminul Islam, 22, Mohir Uddin, 45, Ataharul Islam, 28, and Abubakkar Miah, 25.

The injured were rushed to the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



PHOTO: STAR

A traffic tailback builds up on the airport road as BNP supporters who flocked to the airport to welcome Prime Minister Khaleda Zia parked their vehicles haphazardly.

WB for an independent accountability body

STAR REPORT

The World Bank (WB) has suggested formation of an independent national accountability and anti-corruption commission where stakeholders could meet and review efforts for accountability, transparency and the rule of law.

The members of the commission may be appointed for five years. Once the government appoints the members, they cannot be removed unless there is any specific case of abuse of power or corruption that must be proved by a three-member judicial committee, the WB suggested in a report released yesterday.

AS it is unlikely for the government to raise the level of accountability on its own, the WB recommended that the commission consist of the people from the civil society with high integrity.

"A public sector ethics code and disclosure of assets rules exist, but are not enforced. Allegations against politicians are rarely if ever independently investigated. Public servants can enrich themselves at public

expense with impunity," the WB said.

The WB made several recommendations for transparency and accountability in the report titled "Bangladesh: Financial Accountability for Good Governance" against the backdrop of corruption pervading all areas of public activities in the country.

On the country's power structure it said, "The prime minister and her party have the balance of power and the parliament and the judiciary are in a constant struggle to assert themselves against the centralised power of the executive."

The report on government malpractice in the early 1990s confirms extensive corruption in public procurement. The extent of corruption has since by all accounts increased and spread to all levels of bureaucracy and politics, the report pointed out.

It blamed administrative inefficiency and reluctance to simplify and streamline procedures on the government for underlying corruption.

Principal tools of surveillance with accountability

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4