

# FTA with India should be mutually beneficial: FM

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday said a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India will take place only if it is considered mutually beneficial.

"If it is not mutually beneficial, FTA will not take place," he said.

Talking to UNB at his office, Khan said, "We will not shy away from the talks on FTA, but it should be clear that the agreement should be mutually beneficial... and it will help reduce the trade gap and protect Bangladesh's interests."

At the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) meeting held here on July 14-16, Dhaka and New Delhi agreed to open talks on the Indian proposed FTA in mid-October.

Asked about commerce minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury's observation on a 4-point prerequisite for talks on the FTA, Khan said, "What the commerce minister stated was not conditions for FTA, but for creating a congenial atmosphere and confidence building to set about the negotiations."

On the proposed Dhaka-Agartala bus service, he said officials in the transport sectors of both the countries are now engaged in discussion and "we're waiting for conclusion of their

## Saddam sons

FROM PAGE 12

ern Iraq in the second fatal attack on troops from the 101st Airborne Division since they tracked down and killed the two brothers.

The US military said the three soldiers from the 101st died when their vehicles were ambushed close to Qayara, south of Mosul, by gunmen who also fired rocket-propelled grenades.

However, senior defence officials in Washington told Fox News that the bodies were not positioned in any way and that the pictures were not altered.

Arab satellite station al-Jazeera and another Arabic channel were showing the pictures over and over in Iraq and the Arab world.

The Iraqi Media Network, established by the US-led coalition, likely will also air the photos, and Iraq's US-backed newspaper will include the photos in a special edition. It's also possible that the coalition may pass out and drop from aircraft flares that have the photos on them so that all Iraqis get the word that Saddam's sons are dead.

Defence officials earlier told Fox News that Uday possibly took his own life due to a "major head wound" suffered during the raid on a house.

But one senior defence official said later that you could tell Uday killed himself from the photos as much as you could tell he died of a drug overdose. The official said there simply is not enough evidence in the photos to determine that Uday took his own life.

Both bodies have visible shrapnel wounds. While suicide is a possibility, officials said they will wait for autopsy results before making any conclusions.

Military sources told that Uday and Qusay "looked" to have tried to change their appearance. Uday appears in the pictures seen at the Pentagon with a shaved head and a long beard, a new addition to his look. Qusay has longer hair -- perhaps down to his shoulders -- than he had been previously seen with, as well as a fuller beard than he had earlier.

One official told that based on the photos at the Pentagon of Saddam's sons, while the bodies are battle-damaged, they are "clearly identifiable."

In Baghdad, some members of Iraq's Governing Council were shown the brothers' bodies, which are being kept at Baghdad International Airport, said a spokesman for the Coalition Provisional Authority.

The authority also was talking with council members about how to release pictures of the bodies to the public; the spokesman said on condition of anonymity. Many Iraqis likely will be sceptical of the US account without proof of the brothers' deaths.

"There isn't the slightest doubt in our minds that these are the bodies of Uday and Qusay," the spokesman said.

US officials meanwhile warned of the risk of revenge attacks, and al-Jazeera television aired footage of masked men with rifles and grenade launchers vowing vengeance. They "we will make them regret what they did to Uday and Qusay," one said.

Five US soldiers have now been killed since the deaths of Uday, 39, and Qusay, 37, Saddam's heir apparent. In all, 11 have died in the

## One admits to attacking Kazipara community centre

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One of the two youths, Shahed Ali, caught after the Kazipara community centre mayhem, provided confessional statement before the court.

In his statement Shahed confessed that President of Dhaka City (North) unit of Jubo League Abul Bashar masterminded the attack.

According to the statement, Shahed and four others, led by Robin, carried out the attack in the community centre on July 19 in an attempt to kill Shabbir Alam Litu, Tejoan thana unit general secretary of Jubo League.

Metropolitan Magistrate Shafiq Anwar recorded Shahed's statement from 1:00pm to 4:00pm.

Locals had managed to catch Shahed Ali and Amir Hossain alias Babu as they were making off after carrying out the attack inside the community centre.

The two were placed on a three-day remand on July 20.

Babu was placed on a further two-day remand yesterday when the detective branch (DB) produced Babu before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, with a 10-day remand and prayer.

Six gunmen opened fire on the wedding reception of Assistant Organising Secretary of Mirpur Thana unit of Jubo League Golam Mostafa Labu at Kazi Community Centre at Kazipara on July 19.

The case was shifted to the DB on July 20.

## Two students stabbed at Kadomtala

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Misceants stabbed two students in separate incidents at Kadomtala under Sabujbagh and Modhubagh under Ramna thana yesterday.

An HSC student of Habibullah Bahar College, Kamruzzaman Dipu, 18, was repeatedly stabbed in front of Kadamtala School by three miscreants appearing in an auto-rickshaw at around 2:00pm.

Dipu, son of Khorshel Alam of Kadamtala, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Dipu said he could not identify any of the criminals.

In the other incident, Sumon, a class X student of National Bank High School, was allegedly stabbed in the left hand in an attack by three to four youths.

They waylaid Sumon, 15, as he reached Moghbazar at about 2:00pm. He was returning home at 366/2, Modhubagh from his school.

Ramna and Sabujbagh police could not arrest anybody till yesterday evening.

## Client allegedly kills sex worker

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A sex worker was killed allegedly by a client at his house at East Hajpara in the city on Wednesday night.

Police and hospital sources said garment worker Dulal brought the woman aged around 25 to his house from Khilgaon rail crossing Wednesday morning when his wife, also a garment worker, went out for work.

Dulal hit the woman on the head following an altercation over payment, killing her on the spot. He then wrapped her body with a cloth and kept it under the cot in his room.

Dulal's wife Jotina returned from work at about 8:00pm and came to know about this. As the couple was locked in a quarrel over the matter, neighbours rushed to their house and informed Khilgaon police about the murder.

Dulal was arrested. Police said he confessed his guilt.

A case was filed with the Khilgaon Police Station.

## Leaky pipes

FROM PAGE 12

Most pipelines in Lalbagh, Chakbazar, Sadarghat, Banglabazar, Gandaria, Islampur, Sutrapur, Bangshal, Armanitola and parts of Narinda are made of cast iron. They were installed during the British rule.

Deposition of chemicals and filth pipes has reduced the radius of the capacity of the CI pipes to carry water. Besides, iron bacteria thrive inside the pipelines, sources said.

The ruptured pipes also pollute and carry contaminated water to clients' houses, they added.

The systems loss has hobbled the WASA efforts to raise its capacity and ensure better supply to customers despite the launch of Sayedabad Water Treatment Plant.

About 75 per cent of WASA's supply network is made of the PVC pipes, which are in a good serviceable condition, the officials said.

The WASA took up Water Pipelines Installation and Replacement project last year.

Under the project, which will end in 2007, the CI and MS pipes will be replaced.

## AES to get

FROM PAGE 1

sell-off only if the two companies give some concessions in return.

The power board initially asks the AES to cancel the two 'priority agreements' with the government that give it first priority right among current and future independent power plants (IPPs) in all respects including getting paid from the PDB, receiving foreign exchange from Bangladesh Bank, getting gas and others.

It also urged the AES to relocate the demised corridor, a strip of land covering the riverfront, at its own cost so that the discharge channel is located within its own premises, and employ credible and well-established international operation and maintenance contractor to operate the two projects.

Following months of negotiation and scrutiny, the energy ministry constituted a committee headed by a member of planning and development at the power board. The committee submitted its report on July 12.

However, lobbyists alleged to have pressed the PDB to expunge a significant part of the original report.

Sources said, the committee recommended cancellation of the priority agreement in a bid to put all IPPs on equal footing. But the PDB modified and re-wrote this recommendation, as priority agreement is part of the security package with lenders. The priority agreement practically puts all other new IPP projects in the next 22 years behind the AES projects, irrespective of future needs and other considerations.

The government granted the privilege to end an impasse with the AES over the debate awarding of the Meghnaghat 2 project to Marubeni.

"Since the Meghnaghat 2 agreements were never signed with Marubeni, the necessity for the priority agreements was no longer required. The power board believes the existence of the AES priority agreements discourages other financiers to fund new power projects," said a source.

"If the two priority agreements are not made null and void it will be extremely difficult for the government to find any company to invest in another power project," said a source, adding that the Meghnaghat 2 tender received no

response from any serious international developers because of the AES agreement.

On the demised corridor issue, the committee recommended that the AES must conduct a proper environmental impact assessment and relocate the discharge channel at its own cost.

But modifying the recommendation the PDB now states that all cost in relocating the corridor inside the premises of the AES will be borne by the AES-Globeleq and outside by the power board. The PDB will have to bear bulk of the costs in the revised proposal, experts said.

The committee suggested the CDC, being a company with no experience of running large-scale power plants, should hire competent operation and maintenance contractors.

Again, the PDB shifted its stance to state that only the equipment manufacturers' service contract is enough after the changeover.

## Larma

FROM PAGE 1

fect like the Kulaura eco-park project.

Committee for Indigenous People's Land Rights and Environment (CIPLRE) staged the rally at Beduria Primary School which was attended by about 1,500 people from the Garo and Koch communities.

Other speakers at the rally said in place of taking action against corrupt forest officials, who were plundering the forest resources, the government was caging the indigenous people putting up high walls around the forest.

Gano Forum leader Pankaj Bhattacharya said legal actions would be taken if the situation called for.

Presided over by Albert Mankhin, the rally was also addressed by Adibashi Forum General Secretary Sanjib Drong, Benedict Mangsang, Babul de Nakrek, Biu Filomoni Mrong, Anthony Mansang and Maloti Nakrek.

The rally also demanded a dialogue of the government with the indigenous people on the Madhupur project, establishment of their constitutional rights and withdrawal of cases filed against them for opposing the project.

## BNP MP's brother

FROM PAGE 12

transferred it to the tribunal for a quick disposal.

The prosecution lawyers, appointed on behalf of the complainant, said the charges brought against the accused were primarily proved and the Investigation Officer (IO) of the case had submitted a charge sheet against Monir and 22 others.

Moreover, the tribunal framed charges against Monir and 22 others on July 13. So, at this stage, the charges brought against Monir and nine others can not be withdrawn, the lawyers said.

The defence lawyers, while making submissions on the issue, pointed out that the home ministry had earlier decided to withdraw the charges against the accused since the case was filed on the basis of falsehood and fabrication.

Therefore, the charges brought against Monir and nine others will be withdrawn, the defence lawyers said.

Meanwhile, Special Public Prosecutor, Harun-ur-Rashid Khan told the court that he had earlier received a letter of the home ministry with a direction to take necessary steps for withdrawal of charges against the accused persons. As per direction, he had submitted all documents to the tribunal.

Two men, named -- Amir Abdullah Shakil, 26 and Sentu, 30, were shot dead on February 16, last year allegedly by them.

The complainant and brother of the victim Shakil, Amir Hamza,

filed a murder case accusing Monir and nine others on the same day with Keraniganj police station.

The Investigation Officer of the case submitted a charge sheet against Monir and 22 others on November 20, last year.

Monir and eight others are in the jail custody while 10 others are on bail. Four accused -- Talim, Javed, Azad and Meshbah -- have been absconding since the incident.

## Cops fail

FROM PAGE 1

istration) of the Multimode Group, to the Anchor Tower on Sonargaon Road when the car hit the motorbike of Dr Shajahan Ali near Sobhanbagh mosque.

Dr Shajahan's leg got entangled in the extra bumper of the Proton Saga and turning a deaf ear to all the warnings from the passersby, Sujon dragged the doctor for over a kilometre.

The victim was let off near the Green Road intersection of Panthapath. As the car drove on, it damaged several rickshaw-vans and injured Rana, a six-year-old boy.

Although Mohammadpur thana had filed a murder case, police made no effort to trace the culprits. After about a fortnight, The Daily Star investigation revealed the identity of the culprits.

"We have asked the Multimode Group to hand over Din Mohammad to us, but so far they have not done anything," said a police source.

## Teenage maid found dead in Uttara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage maid allegedly 'hanged herself' from ceiling fan in Uttara Sector-4 early yesterday.

Shahida Akhter, a domestic help in the residence of Golam Sarwar Chowdhury, 2/C at road No. 16, was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at 12:45pm yesterday, DMCH sources said.

It was said in the inquest report that Shahida might be raped before her death.

But duty officer of the Uttara Police Station denied this allegation.

A person, introducing himself as a detective branch (DB) officer at the DMCH, said Golam Sarwar is brother of a DB officer.

An unnatural death case was filed with the Uttara Police Station.

Meanwhile, a vegetable shop employee in Malibagh died at DMCH yesterday.

Mohammad Khalil, 16, was beaten up by another employee of a neighbouring shop at 6:00pm Wednesday as they locked in arguments.

He was first rushed to Malibagh Community Hospital and later to DMCH.

Khalil succumbed to his injuries at 5:00pm yesterday.

## 10 hurt as BCL factions clash in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Ten people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of Chhatra League at Morralganj yesterday morning.

The injured are Elias Hossain Dulal, 35, Azizur Rahman Palash, 25, Hasib, 28, Golam Kibria Tarik, 28, Aminul Islam Milon, 26, Jamal Hossain, 35, Babul, 26.

They were admitted to different clinics.

The clash took place at around 9am when supporters of the two rival groups -- one led by BCL upazila unit President Mahmud Hossain and the other by General Secretary Elias Hossain -- faced each other in Morralganj town.

Police said the group led by Elias came under attack first.

The clash is a sequel to sharp intra-party rivalry over formation of a new upazila committee of the AL backed student body.

Police dispersed the feuding groups and brought the situation under control.

## Cairns Test

FROM PAGE 1

Whatmore opted for Sanwar because of his off-spin, which the Australian felt could be vital on the green wicket of Cairns.

The Cairns game will mark the Test debut for 21-year-old Monir, whose introduction in the playing eleven is experimental. Bangladesh bowled and fielded very well in the first Test where Australia could score 407-7 in 118 over.

But the Bangladesh batting remained a cause of concern. The Tigers were bowled out for 97 in the first innings and scored 178 in their second essay.

Bangladesh captain Khaled Mahmud feared that it would be worse in Cairns if the batsmen fail to apply themselves on this hostile wicket.

He also said that the toss would vital for the visitors.

"I want to win the toss this time and field first," said Mahmud.

BA NGLADESH Khaled Mahmud (capt), Javed Omar, Hannan Sarkar, Habibul Bashar, Mohammad Ashraful, Khaled Mashud, Sanwar Hossain, Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza, Tapash Baishya, Alok Kapali and Anwar Hossain Munir.

## Spider Web drive in sticky stew

FROM PAGE 1

ters in Jessore, Jhenidah, Sathkhira and Pirojpur.

The strategists of the drive thought the criminals of Khulna will try to escape through Jessore, Jhenidah and Sathkhira while the criminals of Bagerhat will escape through Pirojpur once the operation gets underway.

The operation blueprint said after the beginning of the drive, the joint forces would comb through the pockets of underground operatives in each union and fan out in the entire region like cobweb.

But proving the strategy erroneous, the outlaws melted away through Gopalganj.

Some policemen maintaining cosy links with the criminals also tipped the outlaws off the drive ahead of its launch, sources said.

Besides, the joint forces could not surprise the criminals as words of the operation spread in the air days before the drive began.

"The total budget for the operation has been fixed at taka six crore," said a police official involved in the crackdown. "We

have already received taka two crore."

Under the operation, taka one crore has so far been spent to gather information about the criminals operating in the region.

A number of army officers have been deputed to the BDR and assigned to the drive. Each of them has been given Tk 25,000 as 'source money' to gather information on the criminals, the sources added.

But many officers could not spend the money as their sources of information went into hiding along with the criminals.

Home Secretary Omar Faruk, however, denied the involvement of any army officer in the operation.

The operation was likely to continue for 15 days, but it may lurch into extra time in view of the low success achieved so far, the sources said.

Three main underground parties -- Porbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), Biplobi Communist Party-Haq Group (BCP) and New Biplobi Communist Party are locked in perennial armed strug-

gles in the southwestern region.

Some of their splinter groups are also involved in sheer criminal activities, sources said.

The decades old turf war between arch-rivals BCP and BCP, believers in extermination of class enemy, gathered pace recently and at least 34 people, including local people's representatives and policemen, were killed in 15 days prior to the beginning of the operation.

Traditionally the extremists were largely armed with 303 rifles, double-barrel guns and in some cases with sten guns, smuggled into Bangladesh by gunrunners from India.

But now the outlaws have equipped themselves with sophisticated modern weapons including submachine guns, AK-47 and other types of assault rifles, available in the black market of Chittagong and the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Extreme left politics trickled into the southwestern region from eastern Indian state of West Bengal where the ideology thrived in 1960s.

# 58 Bangladeshis nabbed while entering Pakistan from Kashmir

AFP, Jammu

Fifty-eight Bangladeshis were taken into custody by Indian troops as they tried to cross the heavily-militarised Kashmir border into Pakistan in hopes of finding work, officials here said Thursday.

The Bangladeshis, none of whom were armed or deemed a security threat, were handed over to police who will deport them, an Indian defence ministry official said.

The Bangladeshis were picked up Wednesday night in the Makwal border village, 27 km west of Indian Kashmir's winter capital Jammu.

The official said one of the

Bangladeshis, identified only as Zia, said each member of the group had paid 5,000 Indian rupees (100 dollars) to a guide who escorted them and promised "lucrative jobs for all of us."

Indian officials say the Kashmir frontier is regularly used by Islamic militants crossing from Pakistani territory to join the 14-year insurgency against New Delhi's rule in the two-thirds of the Himalayan province administered by India.

A police spokesman said there was no space to jail the would-be illegal immigrants but said they would be warned of jail time if they should try to cross again.

India in January announced a mass deportation drive of millions of Bangladeshis it said were in its territory illegally and posed a security threat. Bangladesh denied any illegal emigration to India and accused New Delhi of violating due procedure by "shoving" people across their border.

Bangladesh was part of Pakistan from 1947 to 1971, when it broke away in a bloody war for independence.

## Foy's Lake

FROM PAGE 1

considered as one of the most beautiful tourist attractions for years.

Soon after getting authority of the Lake, BPC officials erected a signboard there and deployed their men to oversee the routine affairs of the Lake and its management, sources said.

## Mishel's killers

FROM PAGE 1

young boy lost he (Mishel) should disclose everything after his release.

Police caught Shoyeb with his motorcycle. But let off as an accomplice of Shoyeb confused police by identifying him as Zakir, a top police official said.

Police, however, seized Shoyeb's motorbike, which was used in the kidnap.

Officer-in-charge of the Shyampur Police Station said they are on the hunt for Shoyeb and other accused.

## Shazneen case

FROM PAGE 12

1998.

Special Public Prosecutors Mahbub Ahmed and Arfan Uddin Khan appeared for the state while advocates Mosharraf Hossain Kajor, Mizanur Rahman and MA Kamrul Hasan Khan Aslam defended the accused.

## Flood situation

FROM PAGE 12

of the Padma to move to safety by the hour.

More than half of the area of the upazila complex was lost to erosion, as the river was advancing inland, threatening the residence of the upazila nirbahi officer, officers' quarters and business establishments.

BSS adds: The latest wave of erosion triggered by the recession of floodwaters ate up 63 buildings and other structures, including the Louhajang Police Station.

The erosion, worst in the past 10 years, has largely been blamed on indiscriminate extraction of sands from the Padma, which affected the river course.

Our correspondent from Chandpur reports that river erosion turned alarming at ten points in the districts. Many living in the riverside areas moved to safety as the erosion is increasing by the day.

A report from Rangpur said the Teesta waters damaged around 5.74 kilometres of flood control embankments and 3.35km flood protection areas.

According to Rangpur district relief and rehabilitation officials, the floods affected more than 20,000 families and damaged 600 houses completely and another 550 partially in 27 unions and one pargana in the district.