



PHOTO: STAR

Students have ringed off the blood smeared spot where Dr Humayun Azad was hacked Friday night by unknown hitmen; Dr Kamal Hossain of Gano Forum joins a procession of teachers of Dhaka University on the campus yesterday protesting the attack.

Washington,
Dhaka talk
bilateral
issues

UNB, Dhaka

As Dhaka and Washington yesterday reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations,

US Ambassador Harry Thomas said increased American investment is coming to Bangladesh.

After an hour-long meeting with the US envoy, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said they had discussed all aspects of bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

He said bilateral economic agenda, capacity building and Bangladesh's access to American market came up in the meeting.

"There was no new subject," Khan said, adding that the United States is happy with the investment climate in Bangladesh.

Asked his comment on the US report on human rights in Bangladesh, he refrained from making any specific comment, saying that it is an internal matter of the US foreign policy.

This is neither positive nor negative for Bangladesh, Khan said, adding, "We've our own mechanism

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No breakthrough in N Korea nuke talks

REUTERS, Beijing

Six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear crisis yesterday ended without a breakthrough but a senior US official says the meetings advanced Washington's agenda of dismantling all atomic arms schemes.

But a senior US official declared the talks that also involved South Korea, Japan and Russia "very successful", saying all but Pyongyang had agreed to the goal of a nuclear-free North.

"The event has exceeded my expectations in a very important respect. It's been very successful in moving the agenda towards our goal of complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling (CVID) of DPRK nuclear programmes," the US official said.

"CVID is now more on the table

than ever."

Russia's chief delegate, Alexander Losyukov, said the talks achieved "modest" results. But he called the working groups "a reasonable base for the continuation of discussions of those problems arising from the different positions".

Analysts said, however, that Washington and Pyongyang could both dig in their heels in this US presidential election year.

"North Korea does not have to strike any agreement now, ahead of the November election in the United States," said Yu Suk-ryul of Seoul's Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security.

"The United States has a need to avoid collapse of the talks before the

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2 UPDF men
abducted in
Rangamati

PCJSS blamed
for the act

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Rangamati

Two United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) members were abducted from their village home at Chikonchhara in Ghilachhara union under Naniarchar upazila Thursday night.

The UPDF in a press release yesterday blamed its rival Parbatya Chattagram Jono Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) for the kidnapping.

The release alleged a group of about 10 PCJSS armed cadres

Haiti rebels close in on capital

Anarchy grips Caribbean country

REUTERS, Port-Au-Prince, Haiti

Rebels yesterday overran a key crossroads town and crept closer to the Haitian capital as supporters of embattled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide terrorised the civilian population of Port-au-Prince.

Bands of armed Aristide loyalists roamed in trucks and cars through the chaotic capital. A body was seen at a roadside near the Cite Soleil slum, apparently hacked with machetes, and two more were found near the airport, one with hands bound.

Despite repeated attempts yesterday, Naniarchar police could not be contacted over phone for comments.

wearing masks, blocked dozens of intersections, igniting piles of tires and harassing motorists. Gunfire rang through the sprawling city.

The stage was set for a showdown between the ragtag band of former soldiers and gang members trying to unseat Aristide, and the diminutive former priest and one-time populist hero of Haitian democracy backed by an ill-trained, 4,000-member police force and armed supporters from the slums.

Aristide, who political opponents have long accused of corruption and political thuggery, again vowed he would not be pushed from office and

appealed for help from foreign nations.

In Washington, US defence officials said they were considering sending a three-ship group carrying US Marines to Haiti to help deal with the crisis in the Caribbean country of 8 million, the poorest nation in the Americas.

President George W Bush, asked if Aristide should resign, pointed to comments from Secretary of State Colin Powell on Thursday. Powell had said Aristide should "examine his position carefully," indicating US support for him was wavering.

Land-grab sinks shrimp farm dev in Noakhali

MD NURUL AMIN, Noakhali

Locals doubt the administration's ability to recover large farms from illegal occupiers and divide them into 10 acre plots for individuals and 30 acre plots for a company for fresh allocation as names of ministers, lawmakers and ruling alliance leaders figure high on the list of encroachers.

About 3,000 acres of 11,805 acres of government land allocated for shrimp farming have fallen into influential encroachers' hands over the past eight years, contributing to about Tk 5 crore in lost revenue.

The convening committee members will be assigned to scrutinise and finalise the strategies to float the party by this month.

A meeting today among the adherents of the ex-president would finalise the venue and date of the

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Cops fear to be marked during hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most police officials during hartal-hour duty in the city yesterday did not wear name tag on their uniform, fearing reprisal from those who are now in the opposition.

Several police officials said whenever on hartal duty, they keep the tag in their pocket to evade being identified by the agitating political party.

"We have observed in many cases that whenever we go into action under direction of our superiors, the strike enforcers list us as pro-government," said a police official at Russell Square in Dharmodhali yesterday.

An on-duty police inspector at Maghbazar crossing said every time there is a change of government, the police officials have to face adverse situations during hartal hours.

"Ramma and Motijheel police officials were most vulnerable when the Awami League was in office, as those are the places where BNP agitations were most pronounced," he added.

"As soon as the BNP came to power, police officials who had carried out hartal duty and at times had to use force were one way or the other reprimanded."

A police official at Russell Square said cops of Motijheel, Ramma and Dharmodhali police stations are subject to such fears during the BNP rule.

"The officers and constables alike don't want to be mentioned as supporter or even sympathiser of any political party and that's why we keep the name tags hidden," he noted.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League workers are confined inside the Bangabandhu Avenue party office by police during yesterday's hartal.

Red tape delays hepatitis-B vaccination

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bureaucratic tangles have delayed the launch of a countrywide hepatitis-B vaccination programme by about two years.

The programme was to start in June 2002 after official estimates that about 22,000 children die every year from chronic hepatitis B virus (HBV) came to light.

In 2002, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) committed to providing hepatitis-B vaccines worth about \$40 million for all children under one year for free over a five-year period under

ATTACK ON DR KAMAL JS body for legal action against culprits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's Extended Programme of Immunisation (EPI).

But EPI officials attaching greater priority to polio eradication diverted part of the GAVI funds to 'sub-national immunisation programme' in several areas, delaying anti-hepatitis-B vaccination.

Studies show that the vaccine is 98 percent effective in preventing children and adults from chronic infection.

About five percent people in Bangladesh are chronically infected with the deadly virus.

Hepatitis-B virus is transmitted

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More diesel on way to avert crisis

NURUL ALAM, Chittagong

Kuwait, India and Singapore are expected to supply 266,000 tonnes of diesel within a month as per negotiated deals, official sources said.

Two lakh tonnes will arrive from Kuwait, 50,000 tonnes from India and the rest from Singapore.

Failure to buy fuel through international tender prompted the state-owned Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) to procure such a huge quantity of diesel without any bidding to offset a looming crisis of the fuel oil in the peak season of irrigation-based farming across the country, the sources said.

"BPC went for emergency purchase of diesel from the three

countries in a bid to tackle the crisis during such a peak season as delay in the tender process caused a sudden shortfall of diesel and the country was heading towards a big fuel crisis," a top official of the corporation said.

"The situation reached an alarming stage in the past few weeks forcing the authorities to make spot purchase of diesel," the official said on condition of anonymity.

He however added, "If we get these 2,66,000 tonnes of diesel within March, we hope to overcome the crisis. If there is no shipping problem in reaching the consignments, things will not go wrong."

A consignment of 20,000 tonnes of diesel supplied by Indian Oil

Corporation is likely to reach Chittagong Port today.

Bangladesh is importing fuel from India for the first time.

The country needs 35 lakh tonnes fuel oil, including 18 lakh tonnes of diesel annually. Of this, 13 lakh tonnes are supplied by the Eastern Refinery Ltd. after processing the crude.

During the peak season, the country requires about 10,000 tonnes of diesel a day while its stock stood at less than 60,000 tonnes yesterday, sources said.

The government plans to procure the total requirement of fuel this year (2004) through negotiated deals instead of following tender process, officials said.

Source: Islamic Foundation

Prayer Timings

February 29

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-07	6-12
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

A container train derailed at Amirkhan in Narsingdi yesterday afternoon, disrupting train service on Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet routes.

The Dhaka-bound goods train from Chittagong met with the accident when ten bogies of the train fell on both sides of the rail tracks at around 1:30pm, railway sources said.

The accident also snarped the train service on Laksham route.

A relief train from Dhaka reached the spot and started rescue operation.