

# Sharon to seek US nod for Gaza plans

REUTERS, London

Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom says Prime Minister Ariel Sharon will visit Washington this month to seek US approval for his evicting plan to evacuate the Gaza Strip.

"Still it is not a complete plan," Shalom told a media briefing in London yesterday. "The prime minister would like to complete it... (before)... his meeting with President Bush at the end of March in Washington. He has said he will not do it unless it will be agreed with the Americans first."

A senior Israeli source, who asked not to be identified, said Sharon was considering four options for a withdrawal that is likely to be unilateral because the Israeli leader believes he has no Palestinian negotiating partner.

The options are to leave Gaza; evacuate all settlements, but keep a military presence on a border strip with Egypt; keep a military presence in Gaza; or remove all settlements and leave no civilian or military presence in the entire Gaza Strip.

"It looks as if it might be a full evacuation, but it is not agreed yet," the source said, referring to the fourth option.

Sharon has publicly spoken only of evacuating most of the 7,500 Jewish settlers living in Gaza enclaves that are hard to defend and setting a new "security line" in the West Bank.

## Opposition whip

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Abdus Shahid who demanded immediate dissolution of parliament and snap polls.

With her flagged vehicle barred from the cantonment, Hasina had to walk four kilometres to the CMH where the gate was slammed on her face, Faruq told newscasters, adding she did not violate any rules.

A day after Hasina and her party leaders were stopped from visiting Azad, critically wounded in a Friday night machete attack allegedly by hit men with ties to fundamentalists, the cantonment board accused them of breaching the army regulation and the Official Secrets Act 1923 as well.

On confiscation of films and tapes of photojournalists and television crews, Faruq said none of the journalists took photographs of any military establishment and they

## U-19 WC Cricket

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All the batsmen got good starts but none could convert those into big scores. Bashir with 29 was the top scorer in the Bangladesh innings, followed by wicketkeeper Dhiman Gosh, who contributed 23. Nafees Iqbal and his opening partner Naeem Islam chipped in with 21 apiece.

But the batsmen really need a vast improvement if they are to pose a challenge to the Australian's in the March 4 final at the Fatullah Stadium.

Meanwhile, former champions England will take on West Indies in the second Cup semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium this afternoon. The winners will face Pakistan in the final on March 5 at the same venue.

## Khulna mayor

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bomb attacks in the city, dubbed as the valley of death for outlaw violence.

Explosive experts, led by Major Sajjad of Jessore Cantonment, defused the powerful grenade, thrown at the mayor's car at the main gate of Khulna City Corporation on Sunday in an assassination bid, in the police station grounds.

The mayor survived the attack unscathed, as the grenade did not explode because of the "assailants' mistake" to take the pin off the device.

"The bomb was live and powerful. An explosion could have taken a heavy toll," the OC quoted the army explosive experts as telling.

Khulna Metropolitan Police authorities said they were trying to uncover the motive for the attempt on Tayebur's life and would pull out all the stops.

"We hope a major breakthrough in the probe soon," a top

## Essentials prices

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Mohiuddin, a vegetables trader at the Hatirjheel market, predicted that the prices of vegetables are most likely to go up from middle of the month as supplies are set to shrink. He however would not cite any reason for the short supply.

"The prices of soyabean oil is becoming dearer every day and currently remains beyond the purchasing capacity of the middle class like us," said Nazma Akhter, a housewife, who came to shop at Hatirjheel kitchen market.

The prices of tomato, aubergine, bean, potato, okra and cucumber remained the same as in the previous week.

In Mohammadpur City Corporation market, a kilo of tomato was selling at Tk 10, aubergine Tk 16, bean Tk 12, potato at Tk 7 and okra and cucumber at Tk 17 each.

## 450mw power unit in Sirajganj okayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Cabinet Purchase Committee yesterday approved a \$291m combined cycle power project in Sirajganj to be constructed jointly by the Bangladeshi company Summit and the Power Development Board (PDB).

The Summit Industrial Mercantile Corporation and Associates, which operates the Khulna large-bore power plant, will pump \$22m into the 450mw project and the PDB will provide land and related infrastructure.

The bulk of the investment will however come from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank and the British donor, CDC.

"This power plant will be set up on build, own, operate (BOO) basis," said State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud. "This is the first joint venture between the government and a private company in the power sector."

Shares of the Sirajganj plant, planned to put in operation by 2007, will also be floated in the market, he said.

On June 14 last year, the PDB picked the lone bidder Summit for the project to set up 2,789 cents/ kilowatt hour for a period of 22 years. Summit also offered \$2.4 rate for per unit gas.

This bid suggested that the PDB would hold 40 percent equity of the project by providing land for the power plant. PDB held only 10 percent equity in both Meghnaghat and Haripur projects.

Yesterday's meeting also approved a Tk 70 crore suppliers credit project to set up radio link and a digital telephone exchange in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. A Chinese company will install this system.

The committee however turned down two other projects -- a 300-meter cable bridge on the Surma river and a Health Bhaban' in Mohakhalia at a cost of Tk 51 crore.

The committee felt construction of such building was unnecessary.

## Khulna outlaw succumbs to injury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

In the first information report, the complainant says the cantonment is restricted area and permission is required for entry. The report says Hasina entered the cantonment with her deputies without permission and despite army request not to proceed.

## PSC

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"No proofs could be found in the inquiry into these allegations," the PSC authority told the president.

Commission members also sought cooperation for upholding the image and dignity of the PSC as a constitutional institution for 'national interest'.

They also stressed accelerating construction works of PSC building. The president thanked them for submitting the annual report in time.

Among others, Mezbuddin Ahmed, secretary to the president, was present during the meeting.

officer said.

## VALLEY OF DEATH

The attack on Tayebur stirred utter security fears in Khulna, once dubbed as the city of tranquility in the confluence of the Rupsa and Bhairab rivers.

City AL president Manzurul Imam, prominent journalist Manik Chandra Saha and dozen of law-enforcers figure in the long list of casualties in the southwestern city, home to 15 lakh people.

Expressing his concern at the down-sliding law and order in the city, the peace of which is often broken by fatal bomb attacks and gunshots, Tayebur yesterday promised action to hold back the fall.

Talking to the Daily Star yesterday, he said he had very good relations with his colleagues in the BNP and leaders of all political parties.

"There is no question of the involvement of any political party or my party rivals in the grenade attack on me," he said.

Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television and private TV channels will air special programmes and national dailies will publish special articles highlighting the significance of the day.

## Morshed

FROM PAGE 1

heinous design", he said.

Regarding the referendum in Taiwan on March 20, he said Taiwan as a province of China cannot go for referendum without the consent of the Chinese government.

Referring to a hartal called by some of the opposition parties in the county, he said it has created a serious adverse impact on the country's development process and it was a matter of great concern for foreign investors and development partners of the country.

The foreign minister also condemned the heinous attack on Prof Humayun Azad and said the government has been doing everything possible for his proper treatment.

## Cellphone

FROM PAGE 12

the BTTB cellphone project.

The committee asked the BTTB to repair inoperative phones in 72 hours after subscribers report to the board.

Yesterday's meeting was told there were about 24 illegal connections in Barisal and the BTTB in its report accused two Agaljara exchange officials of fraud and told the meeting departmental punishment against them was underway.

## Cops swoop on workers

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The law enforcers defied requests for calm from senior AL leaders including Abdur Razzak and Rahmat Ali and surged into the AL headquarters in riot gear breaking open the locks.

They forced their way into every room of the five-storey building and beat up the opposition leaders and activists indiscriminately.

Although Nur could not give the direction of the bomb's flight, his colleagues claimed AL activists hurled it, dismissing witness accounts that two young men exploded the bomb, coming out of the PirYamini market.

As the leaders and activists of the AL and its front organisations were trying to hide in the washrooms and other apparently safe places in the party headquarters, policemen dragged about 150 of them onto their vans after beating.

Shares of the Sirajganj plant, planned to put in operation by 2007, will also be floated in the market, he said.

On June 14 last year, the PDB picked the lone bidder Summit for the project to set up 2,789 cents/ kilowatt hour for a period of 22 years. Summit also offered \$2.4 rate for per unit gas.

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The committee however turned down two other projects -- a 300-meter cable bridge on the Surma river and a Health Bhaban' in Mohakhalia at a cost of Tk 51 crore.

The committee felt construction of such building was unnecessary.

The court orders came upon separate writs filed by 113 dismissed employees of the Rajuk.

Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud and senior advocate T H Khan appeared for the petitioners while Additional Attorney General Fida M Kamal stood for the government.

Barrister Rokanuddin submitted that they had been discharged without assigning any reason. There are two ways to get rid of unwanted employees. Either dismiss them showing reason or terminate them giving termination benefits as per law. But in their case no rules were followed.

He was arrested by Joint forces at his house at Ibrahim Mian road under Sonandanga Police Station on February 19 and admitted to the hospital the same day.

Azim's body was handed over to his family after autopsy in presence of a first class Magistrate in the afternoon.

Villagers said at least three people were bullet-hit during the gunfire.

BDR recovered three bullets of LMG, two of 9mm pistol and 10 of other firearms -- all used -- after the incident.

Details of yesterday's half-an-hour gunfire could not be known. Security has been tightened in the area, said BDR officials.

Meanwhile, unknown miscreants captured jeep driver Fazal Ali for extortion when he went to Pilak area for wood and released him after two hours.

The CID team visited the scene where Dr Azad was stabbed on his way to Fuller Road house on the Dhaka University campus.

The team also talked to Suman and Meer Jahan who witnessed the incident and are now in safe custody since Friday night.

They also grilled Bangladesh Chhatra League leader Abu Abbas Bhuiyan, who was placed on a five-day remand on Sunday.

## Azad's health

FROM PAGE 1

Azad regained sense showing marks of improvement in his health, his relatives said they did not know the reason for what they termed 'spreading such disinformation'.

At 3:00pm yesterday, the CID took the docket of the case from Ramma police which will be probed by its Inspector Kazi Abdul Malek.

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## Ashura today

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President Iajudin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the eve of Ashura.

Different religious organisations, including Dayami Complex Bangladesh and Dewanbagh Sharif, have drawn up programmes to observe the day by holding discussions and bringing out Tazia processions in the capital and elsewhere in the country.

Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television and private TV channels will air special programmes and national dailies will publish special articles highlighting the significance of the day.

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the police sources said.

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