



## Hanoi to support Dhaka in joining Asean forum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Vietnam yesterday assured Bangladesh of its full support for Dhaka's bid to join the Asean Regional Forum (ARF).

It will also help Bangladesh become a member of the Mekong-Ganges Cooperation.

Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong gave the assurance during official talks with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at the International Conference Centre, where two agreements on avoidance of double taxation and agricultural cooperation and a protocol on cultural exchange were signed.

Luong and Khaleda also had a 30-minute exclusive meeting before the official talks.

Luong was quoted as saying that Bangladesh, being a member of Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation), and Vietnam, as a member of Asean (Association of South East Asian Nations), can work together to promote inter-regional cooperation.

He appreciated Bangladesh's role in South Asia through Saarc and its 'Look-East' policy.

The president termed the one-hour meeting at the International Conference Centre at the Prime Minister's Office a success. He said his visit will help enhance cooperation between Bangladesh and Vietnam at both bilateral and multilateral levels.

He invited Khaleda to visit Vietnam, which she accepted and

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### TALKS HIGHLIGHTS



- Hanoi assures Dhaka of its support for its bid to join ARF (Asean Regional Forum)
- Agreement on avoidance of double taxation
- Agreement on agricultural cooperation
- Protocol signed on cultural exchange



Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong, right, calls on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office after he arrived in Dhaka on his maiden visit to Bangladesh yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

### CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT

## JS body scrutinises bill, lone opposition MP favours changes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry yesterday started scrutiny of the much-talked-about bill seeking 14th amendment to the constitution with opposition lawmaker Abdul Kader Siddiqui attending the meet and proposing a set of new provisions.

The Krishak Sramik Janata League lawmaker's proposals are on display of the portraits of Bangabandhu, General MAG Osmani and late president Ziaur Rahman, declaration of independence by Zia and 150 reserved seats

for women in parliament.

The main opposition Awami League (AL), two factions of Jatiya Party and an independent lawmaker did not attend the meet, despite invitation of the committee.

The meeting was adjourned and the committee would continue its efforts for opposition participation at its next meeting.

AL President and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked Deputy Leader Abdul Hamid to reassess, if contacted again, that their party rejected the bill and that it would not participate in any discussion on it.

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### CONTEMPT OF COURT

#### HC asks IGP to explain his holding office

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued rule upon Shahidul Huq to explain under what authority he has been holding the office of Inspector General of Police (IGP) after conviction for contempt of court.

A division bench of Justice MA Matin and Justice Syed Reafat Ahmed issued the rule, returnable in three weeks, upon a writ filed by advocate M K Rahman challenging the legality of Huq's holding the office of the IGP.

Opposing the petitioner Attorney General AF Hassan Ariff submitted that the petition could not be entertained as appeal of the IGP against the High Court judgment was pending with the Supreme Court.

He also tried to convince the court that the offence for which the

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## Roads deptt accuses DCC of low quality street work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Roads and Highways Department (R&HD) has complained that Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) does not repair roads properly after digging by service providers despite taking compensation from them.

The complaint was made in a letter to the DCC chief engineer on Sunday.

The letter sent by Director of Dhaka Urban Transport Project under the R&HD Shahabuddin said the department builds roads with bituminous premix asphalt but the DCC repairs those simply with brick soiling in most cases although the service providers pay compensation for digging. Even bricks are also

not used in many of the roads, it said.

A brief list given in the letter consists of Bailey Road, roads from Satrasta to Moghbazar and Banglamotor to Moghbazar, roads in Siddheshwari, Shapla, Chittagong, Fakirapool, Kakrail, Bijoynagar, Hatirpool, Topkhana and Dholakhal areas.

A senior official of the R&HD said the DCC took Tk 18,31,541 from service providers only for repair of Bailey Road to Siddheshwari stretch of the road (less than one km) but it was not repaired properly.

Sometimes only sand or brick is used to repair the dug roads. Besides, pitch is used in a substandard way to repair many roads, he alleged.

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'Anti-constitution' aspects of CHT peace deal needs review MK Anwar tells JS UNB, Dhaka

The minister in charge of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Affairs in parliament MK Anwar yesterday told the House that some provisions of the CHT peace accord which are inconsistent with the constitution needed to be reviewed.

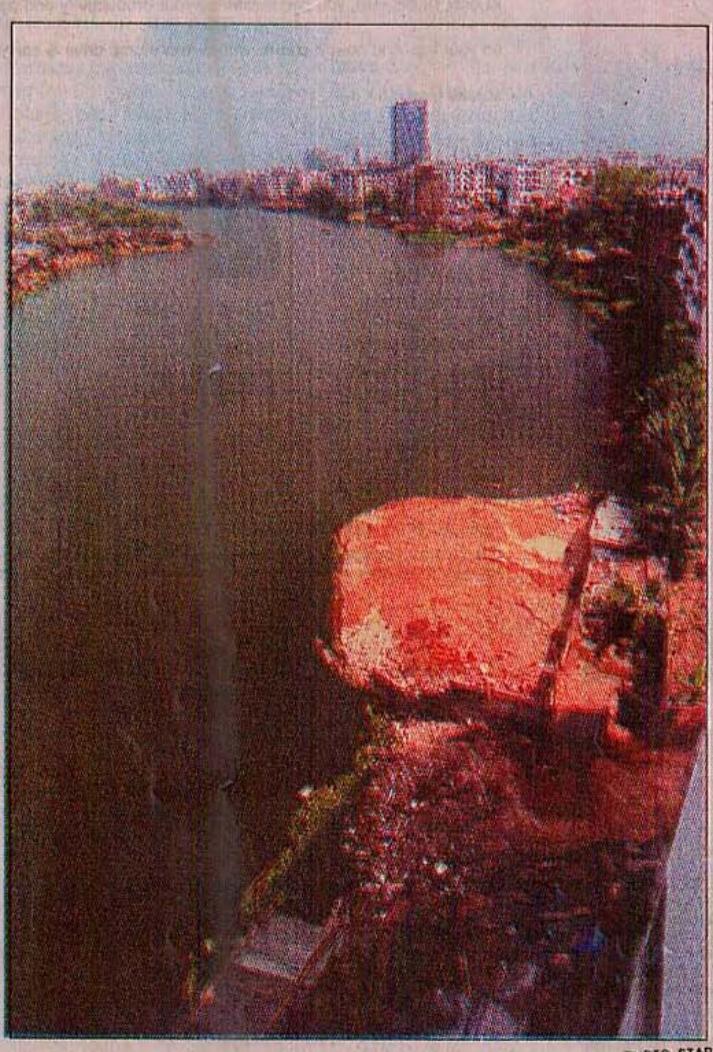
Those provisions, he said, would be placed before the House for consideration.

Replying to a supplementary question from Mehedi Ahmed Rumi (BNP), the minister said apart from such inconsistent provisions in the accord, signed by the previous Awami League government, the government has been implementing the peace accord.

Anwar said many provisions of the CHT accord, specially those about the Ministry of CHT Affairs, CHT Regional Council, rehabilitation of tribal refugees, have been implemented. He said preparation for the voters' list in the CHT could not be compiled because of a court stay order.

Replying to another question from Maj (retd) Manjur Kader (BNP), the minister admitted that there were problems in carrying out development works in the CHT because of the existence of two

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## Gulshan lake under renewed assault

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some grabbers are filling up a large chunk of Gulshan lake at the end of Road-29 to develop it as a plot for

Local residents said labourers work throughout the night as truck-loads of rubbish are brought to the site to be dumped into the water. They added that a group of musclemen supervise the earthfilling work that starts around midnight.

Chairman of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha (Rajuk) Iqbal Uddin Ahmed said he does not know of the matter and asked for publication of a news report on it so that Rajuk could take action against the grabbers.

"I do not know anything about it. Our officials visited the site but did not notice any fresh encroachment there. You should do a story with photographs. I want to take action," he told this correspondent who witnessed rubbish being dumped into the lake just behind the 'Parasad' apartments.

The grabbers have also opened a mini restaurant on the filled-up area, which a group of local musclemen frequent.

Nearby, a signboard claiming ownership of the 0.21 acres of land refers to a Supreme Court Writ Petition No. 5917/2001 asking authorities not to interfere with any development work at the site.

"They are also bringing potential buyers to the site. But we are afraid to say anything as the grabbers always have their musclemen guarding the site," a local resident said requesting anonymity.

Under the Wetland Protection Act 2000, authorities concerned are supposed to preserve all wetlands and open spaces to protect the environment.

Last year, The Daily Star ran a report, headlined 'Lake robbed overnight' focussing on the same part of the lake in question. But no concrete measures were ever taken while grabbers continued filling up the lake.

Citing official documents, several other newspapers also reported that over 50 influential plot owners in the Gulshan-Banani area on the western edge of the lake have encroached upon several bighas of the lake, either by expanding their plot boundaries or making fresh encroachments.

The offenders include some ministers of the incumbent government, former ministers of the Awami League regime, members of parliament, bureaucrats, businessmen, retired army officials, doctors, lawyers and local elite.

A Rajuk survey conducted in 1999 shows that a sitting state minister alone gobbled up 3.5 kathas of land in the Gulshan part of the lake.

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Part of the Gulshan Lake at the end of Road No. 29 has been reclaimed for development of plots for sale. Such encroachment of water-bodies has added to the environment concerns of Dhaka city with over one crore people.

PHOTO: STAR

## Hamas chief killed in Israel air strike

Militants pledge all-out war

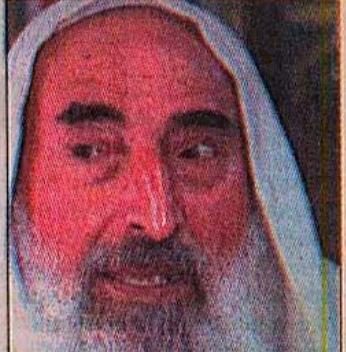
AFP, Gaza City

the city, witnesses and security sources said.

Two of his bodyguards and his son-in-law were among the victims, said sources at Gaza's Al-Shifa hospital, where an AFP correspondent saw Yassin's body.

Israel had made little secret of its intention to eliminate the leadership of Hamas in the aftermath of twin suicide bombings in the southern port of Ashdod last week, claimed by both Hamas and the

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## Mob gouges out eyes of 6 'robbers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An angry mob gouged out the eyes of six alleged robbers at Rampal upazila of Bagerhat yesterday.

Police said local people caught the robbers when they went to a shrimp purchasing centre at Rampal to sell Tk 1 lakh worth of shrimp frits looted from a trawler they hijacked on Baleshwar river earlier in the morning.

The mob gouged out their eyes before handing them over to police.

The alleged robbers are: Abdul Majid, 25, Dulal Farazi, 45, Yunus Howlader, 25, Abdul Jalil, 35, Masum Shaikh, 20, and Aileen Akand, 22. They are now undergoing treatment at Rampal Health Complex.

Police seized the trawler and recovered seven local guns, 31 cartridges, a large dagger, an arrow and a crowbar from the vessel.

## Jamuna Group chief's bail plea rejected, attempted rape case filed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday turned down a bail prayer for Jamuna Group Chairman Nurul Islam Babul over a killing charge, a day after a woman filed an attempted rape case against him.

Babul was denied bail for the third time since arrest in his home in Gulshan-2 on Sunday over the killing of dredger worker Alam Pramanik on September 1 last year.

Earlier, the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate rejected Babul's first bail prayer and turned down the second moved by his lawyer Barrister Roknuddin Mahmud to reconsider the judgement on sending him to jail.

The leading businessman and owner of frontline Bangla newspaper, Dainik Jugantor, was not named in the first information report (FIR) on the killing and was implicated in the supplementary FIR six days later as part of a conspiracy, said well-placed sources at the PMO.

"We are trying to tap business opportunities with Taiwan without

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him," he said.

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## Govt wants China projects to get going on any terms

Trade ties with Taiwan to deepen

SHARIER KHAN

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has asked officials to get three shelved China-led projects off the ground on 'whatever terms China feels happy with' in a bid to please China and let the Taiwan issue die down.

The government, however, intends to continue widening relations with Taiwan, said well-placed sources at the PMO.

"We are trying to tap business opportunities with Taiwan without

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him," he said.

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Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited

### DISTRIBUTION OF DIVIDEND WARRANTS

Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited (DBBL) has declared dividend for the year 2003 in its 8th Annual General Meeting held on March 21, 2004. The Dividend Warrants are ready for delivery. Honorable shareholders are requested to collect their dividend warrant personally or through duly authorized person from DBBL, Head Office, during office hours on or before March 31, 2004.

Dividend warrants not collected within the specified date will be sent to the address recorded in the Company's Member Register by Registered Post/ Courier Service at own risk and responsibility of the Shareholders.

Dated: Dhaka, March 21, 2004

Abul Hashem Khan  
Company Secretary