

POWRIX
Magnetic Contactor & MCCB



Sole Distributor
S. A. TRADERS & CO.
Phone: 9558340, 9565492
Fax: 880-2-9565626-28
E-mail: satoc@dhaka.net

The Daily Star

TODAY'S ISSUE 20 PAGES

PIXEL PLUS



29" PIXEL PLUS TV
More Pixels. More Details

COMMITTED TO
People's Right to Know

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XIV No. 76

DHAKA SUNDAY APRIL 4, 2004

CHAITRA 21, 1410 BS

SAFAR 13, 1425 HIJRI

20 PAGES PRICE: TK 7.00

www.thedailystar.net

Foreign intelligence tip-off led to haul

Ctg arms were heading abroad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar's claim the largest ever arms cache seized on the Chittagong coast on Friday was smuggled in for use in Bangladesh, top intelligence officials said the haul was bound for a foreign destination.

Top intelligence agents said their foreign counterparts tipped off them about the gunrunning a few days ago, saying Bangladesh was being used as a transit route.

They suggested that the consignment was possibly heading towards Assam in restive northeast India from the golden triangle or Southeast Asia.

Babar on Friday said the arms and ammunition were heading towards Dhaka for use against key installations and rallies in Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

SEIZED CACHE



Rocket launcher ammunition and equipment.

SMG (Sub Machine Gun, 7.62mm) - 1,290
Tommy Gun - 100
Semi Automatic Spot Rifle (9mm) - 400
Rocket launchers (40mm) - 150
Grenade launcher - 2,000
Rocket (40mm) - 840
Hand grenade - 25,020
Magazines of SMG & others - 6,392
Bullets - 18.40 lakh rounds

Govt to run full term: PM

UNB, Chandina

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said people had given mandate to the BNP-led four-party alliance to govern the country for five years and the coalition would run its full term.

She said people will not bring those back to power who don't believe in democracy and don't go to parliament.

Khaleda, the BNP chairperson, called upon people to go ahead with politics of development and production rejecting the forces of chaos and unrest forever.

"They (AL) don't believe in peace and democracy. They indulge in politics of destruction, arson and vandalism," she told a big public meeting at Chandina Redwan Ahmed Degree College ground in Comilla.

Criticising their destructive

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Arms cache was on way to 3rd country

Military experts tell *The Daily Star*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former military generals believe the 10 truckloads of arms and ammunition seized in Chittagong on Friday were destined for a third country and Bangladesh was used only as a transit route.

"They expressed grave concern at the trafficking of such a huge consignment of illegal arms and ammunition through Bangladesh, which can be used to fight a regular army and suggested border vigilance be shored up."

Major General (retd) Mainul Hossain Chowdhury said no terrorist group in Bangladesh has ever used rocket launchers except for a

few that the Shantibahini might have used during the decades-long bush war in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

"Local insurgents like the Sarbaharas in the south-western region are known for their style of using homemade weapons like pipe guns and dao (machete). I don't think they would be using rocket launchers," said Mainul.

The former advisor to the caretaker government said, "It is a million-dollar question whether the consignment was brought in for use in Bangladesh or the country was used just as a transit route."

Mainul recalled that explosives,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

CTG ARMS HAUL
Hasina seeks int'l probe

Suspects link of ruling BNP men

AKTER FARUK SHAHIN and SHORAB HOSSAIN, from Galachipa

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday demanded an international inquiry into the huge cache of illegal arms and ammunition seized in Chittagong on Friday and suspected the links of ruling BNP to the smuggling of sophisticated arms into Bangladesh.

"Police and coastguards seized the huge arms cache and I have heard that a cargo vessel belonging to an advisor to the prime minister carried those arms," she told a public meeting at Baufal in Patuakhali in the morning.

"Any of the key men involved

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Arafat dismisses Sharon threat

REUTERS, Ramallah, West Bank

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat says he is unmoved by a threat by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to assassinate him which has drawn criticism from the United States.

Arafat was speaking to reporters yesterday at his battered headquarters in Ramallah hours after a

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Dhaka slates Israel PM's statement on Arafat

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday strongly condemned the recent statement by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to assassinate Palestinian President

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Japan to recruit Bangladeshis

RAFIQ HASAN

For the first time, Japan is going to be opened up for Bangladeshi workers to recruit a good number of workers every year for training and temporary jobs.

The workers will be given one-year training in 62 sub-sectors of industry, agriculture and construction and then employed in Japanese factories for two years.

Workers having at least a graduation degree, aged between 18 and 35 and employed in a local factory will be eligible for recruitment.

Sources at the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment mentioned that many workers went to Japan earlier

through illegal channels and stayed there without valid documents. But Tokyo will now hire Bangladeshi workers and allow them to stay and work temporarily.

The Japanese government took this decision in August last year and a high-powered delegation from Japan International Training Cooperation (JITCO) paid a follow-up visit to Bangladesh from March 27 to 30 to finalise the matter.

The delegation proposed that Bangladeshi workers would be hired for training in 62 sub-sectors in textile, machinery, metal and food industries, agriculture and construction.

Led by JITCO senior vice-president Kagefumi Uero, the team

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



Myanmar PM arrives today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Myanmar Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt arrives in Dhaka today on a three-day official visit.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will receive her Myanmar counterpart at Zia International Airport at about 11:45am. He will be accompanied by a 41-member delegation including several ministers and government officials.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Bomb rips through Khulna bus just before riders board

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A passenger bus rigged with explosives blew up at Sonadanga inter-district bus terminal here yesterday only minutes before passengers were scheduled to board the Dhaka-bound coach.

Sources said the blast rocked the entire terminal as it ripped through the coach of Hanif Enterprise at around 2:10pm, sending people scurrying for cover.

The bus was scheduled to leave at

2:30pm. Police said passengers of the bus were at the waiting room when the bomb went off.

Two people identified as Babar, 30, and Alam, 24, received shrapnel injuries. The explosion also damaged another bus of Eagle Paribahan.

Eyewitness account of the incident said the explosion occurred a short while after a man was seen getting down from the bus. Some said he had left a handbag inside the vehicle before disappearing into the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

MCCI REVIEW OF FIRST 9 MONTHS
Economy slumps
Law and order slide, ad hoc tariff measures seen as major causes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's overall economic situation has worsened over the July-March period of the current fiscal year, reports Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI).

Responding to an MCCI questionnaire, 13 out of 15 leading entrepreneurs of the country blamed law and order uncertainties and some ad hoc revenue and tariff measures of the government for causing the

setback.

"The overall performance of the economy..... has been lower than what was targeted. GDP (gross domestic product) growth has slowed down. Government's revenue collection has fallen. Remittances have gone down. Exports have not fully recovered and the inflation rate is rising," concluded the recently released Review of Economic Situation of the chamber analysing key economic

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

9th Anniversary



Doctors' Loan
Any Purpose Loan
Loan Against Salary
Consumer Credit
Car Loan

To give you convenience in choices and to make your life comfortable
Prime Bank offers wide range of Retail Credit Products just to serve you better.



For further information please step into any of our branches or contact Retail Credit Unit (RCU).

Prime Bank Limited
a bank with a difference

Retail Credit Unit (RCU), Head Office, 29 Rajuk Avenue, Motijheel Com. Area, Dhaka - 1000. Tel: 9559257, 0171-400380



Rubel swims to gold

SPORTS REPORTER

Rubel Rana clinched the first swimming gold for Bangladesh in the Ninth SAF Games when he won the 100m backstroke in Islamabad yesterday.

He finished with 1 minute 27.8 seconds to ensure that the national anthem was played at the Sports Complex Swimming pool for the first time after a frustrating four days. It was the third gold for Bangladesh after Asif Hossain Khan and Shamim Akhter clinched the 10m air-rifle events on the second

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

AL road march today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) will march the Old Dhaka streets today as part of its one-point out-governments movement for what they described as the ruling alliance's absolute failure to deliver.


Top leaders of the AL will lead the procession starting at 3:00pm from Bahadur Shah Park to the Central Shaheed Minar through Sadarghat, Patuatuli, Islampur, Chawkbazar and Nazirabazar.

A meeting of the party presidium members with Opposition Leader and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina in the chair took the agitation programme on April 1.

The city AL held an extended

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Introducing
Off-peak rate
in GP National



Now GP National (mobile to mobile Post Paid) subscribers can enjoy talking @ Tk.3/min to any GP number and @ Tk. 5/min to any other operator's number from 11 pm to 8 am.

Tariff	Peak (8 am to 11 pm)	Off-peak (11 pm to 8 am)
To any GP number	Tk. 4/min	Tk. 3/min
To other operator's number	Tk. 6/min	Tk. 5/min

Moreover on Friday
Talk Day & Night 24 Hours
@ Off-peak Rate

Taxes & levies applicable

GrameenPhone