

No official move from India yet  
Dhaka says on Saarc  
UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh yesterday said it has not received any official communication whatsoever about India's reported willingness to hold the stalled Saarc summit in Dhaka in April.

A Bangla daily in Dhaka yesterday published a report quoting unnamed officials of the Indian External Affairs Ministry that New Delhi is interested to have the postponed summit in the first week of April.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

HABIGANJ CARNAGE  
Detectives quizz AL leader  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Intelligence men are quizzing an Awami League (AL) union unit leader picked up Monday in connection with the January 27 Habiganj carnage.

Sources said Zahedur Rahman Zahid, general secretary of No. 10

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

#### Prayer Timing

February 10

	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-52	5-56
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Hamas, Jihad disown Abbas-Sharon truce

AFP, Jerusalem

1

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Mahmud Abbas were both facing threats to their authority Wednesday after agreeing at a landmark Middle East summit to end four years of bloodshed.

While world leaders hailed what they widely saw as a chance of a historic breakthrough between Israel and the Palestinians, commentators warned that many obstacles lay ahead on the road to peace.

Both Sharon and Abbas declared a ceasefire at the summit in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh but the main Palestinian militant

movement Hamas swiftly dampened some of the optimism by saying it was not bound by the deal.

As Sharon prepared to brief his senior ministers on the outcome of his historic meeting with Abbas and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the shores of the Red Sea, his disgruntled Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom pledged to lead a campaign to ensure his flagship project to quit Gaza is put to a referendum.

Abbas was also facing a struggle to persuade militant factions such as Hamas to support his declared agreement with Sharon "to cease all acts of violence against Israelis and against Palestinians wherever they

are."

In his summit speech, Sharon had reiterated his determination to implement his plan to pull troops and settlers out of the Gaza Strip.

The pullout, due to be completed by the end of the year, will be the first time ever that Israel has left occupied Palestinian territory and has been widely cited as another factor which could transform the peace process.

Shalom was conspicuous by his absence at the summit when Sharon reiterated that he was "absolutely determined to implement the disengagement plan".

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## 3 more killed in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth with a long criminal record and two outlawed leaders were killed, while six others, including four law enforcers, were injured in 'crossfire' incidents in the capital, Jhenidah, and Rajbari yesterday.

With the three latest victims, the number of people killed in 'crossfire' by Rab and police now stands at 224.

Police said crossfire victim Abdul Kader (Mithu), who died at Nikunja in Badda early yesterday, was accused in five cases including three for murder.

When a team of police took the 28-year-old to Nikunja-1 at 3:25am, after he admitted to them his associ-

ates had assembled with weapons in the area, Mithu's accomplices opened fire, prompting the law enforcers to counter with gunshots. "Amid the firefights, Mithu tried to escape and received bullet wounds to the head and right hand," said Sub-Inspector Rezaul Karim of Badda Police Station. Mithu, a resident of Ka-95/2 Uttar Namapara in Khilkhet, died on the spot.

Police retrieved from the spot one Light Gun (LG), nine bullets from a rifle and a revolver, 14 spent bullets and a machete.

Mithu, who recently returned home after spending two years in Saudi Arabia, was arrested by the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Saifur leaves today on EC mission for positive impression

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman goes abroad today on a 11-day trip during which he will visit the European Commission (EC) headquarters to promote trade agendas and to make a positive political impression of Bangladesh.

He will fly today to Jeddah to sign a \$60 million loan agreement with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for the submarine cable project to connect Bangladesh to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



PHOTO: STAR

Jatra (indigenous theater) artistes yesterday protest a home ministry ban on Jatas because of 'security fears'.

Foreign ministry denies Ottawa mission issued passport to Noor

UNB, Dhaka

The foreign ministry yesterday said the Bangladesh mission in Ottawa has not issued any passport to Noor Chowdhury as claimed by the political secretary to the Awami League president.

The Bangladesh High Commissioner in Canada informed that no passport was issued from the Ottawa mission in the name of Noor Chowdhury.

About the date and signature of the official contained in the said passport, a press release of the foreign ministry said no official in that name was employed at the Ottawa mission at that time.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

## 6-day security blanket on Shaheed Minar

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Central Shaheed Minar will be brought under stringent security measures for six days from February 18 to observe the International Mother Language Day.

Members of police, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), Bangladesh Rifles and Special Branch will encircle the area from February 18 to 23.

A meeting at the home ministry with state minister Lutfuzzaman Babar in the chair took the decision yesterday.

Emerging from the meeting, Babar told journalists that the RAB members will perform personal searches of suspected people in the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## Rice urges Europe to get tougher on Iran

REUTERS, Brussels

Secretary of State Condoleezza

Rice urged European allies yesterday to get tougher with Iran, highlighting continuing policy differences despite her call for a new chapter in transatlantic relations.

Rice flew to Brussels for talks with Nato foreign ministers and the European Union after saying Iran should be warned it faces referral to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions unless it accepts an EU deal on its nuclear program.

"(The) Iranians need to hear that if they are unwilling to take the deal,

really, that the Europeans are giving ... then the Security Council looms," she told Fox News.

"I don't know that anyone has said that as clearly as they should to the Iranians," she said in a comment intended not only to pressure Tehran but also to spur France, Britain and Germany to get tough in their negotiations with Iran on the EU's behalf.

Policy divisions over Iran and China were likely to test the upbeat mood nurtured by Rice this week on her maiden journey as secretary of state.

The United States has rejected

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2